Housing Deposit Returns

How this guide helps

The SUSU Advice Centre is committed to providing guidance to all students who are seeking advice about deposit returns and providing direct Adviser support where possible.

To enable you to access our help remotely we have produced clear guidance on what steps you need to take regarding deposit returns in the guide below. It is important to read the guide first as this is the quickest way to access key information. We recognise that for many students this may be enough to answer their questions and help them with the process. We will work to provide further support for those who require it within our capacity. You will find information about how to contact us at the end of the document.

The following guide explains your options if you have not received your deposit back after moving out of your house. Much of the information below is specific to Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreements.

Reading the information in the guide is likely to help you without the need for an Adviser Appointment, or help you make the most of any appointment should you need one.

Deposit – the basics when moving out

To have the best chance of getting your deposit back in full you need to leave the property in as good a condition as you found it when you moved in (the exception being 'fair wear and tear'). The way to provide evidence that you have maintained the good condition of the property is by gathering photos, videos, and/or by checking the inventory you were given/or were taken by you at the start of your contract.

It will also help you to arrange a final check-out visit/inspection of the property at the end of your tenancy with the landlord or agent.

Knowing what type of housing contract you have, and whether it was protected, will help determine how you approach you deposit refund request. (see below). For example, with some types of contracts, such as License agreements, landlords do not always have to protect housing deposits within a scheme.
CHECKING IF YOUR DEPOSIT WAS PROTECTED

To check what type of accommodation contract you have and if your deposit needs to be protected, go to Shelter’s tenancy rights checker here. You can check if your deposit was protected here.

By checking what type of contract you have you will know if your landlord should have also given you confirmation your deposit was protected, the name of the deposit scheme, and how to get your deposit back at the end of the tenancy. This information is known as ‘prescribed information’ and should be given to you within 30 days of paying the deposit to the landlord.

How to request the deposit refund?

We suggest you take the following steps:

1) Leave the property in good state and gather any evidence (e.g. photos, videos, and inventories).
2) Write to the landlord requesting the refund. You will find a template letter to landlord here.
3) If both you and your landlord agree the amount to be returned, your deposit should be returned. In ‘custodial’ deposit protection schemes the money should be returned within 10 working days of making a request (either you or landlord can make the request); in ‘insurance’ based schemes your landlord will return the deposit to you.

How to challenge the proposed deductions?

Firstly, landlord should refund any undisputed amount to you within reasonable timescales (e.g. 10 working days from you requesting the money).

If the landlord does not return your deposit despite your requests, or you do not agree with proposed deductions, or charges the landlord wants to make from your deposit you can ‘raise a dispute’ using the relevant deposit protection scheme.

It may be a good idea to send the landlord a letter confirming that this is what you intend to do.

Deposit dispute resolution is a free service that is offered by all deposit schemes. An independent assessor will decide based on evidence if any deductions to your deposit are fair or not.

Remember to include any photos, emails or other evidence you have to back your claim for deposit refund.

You will find an easy to follow guide on that on Shelter’s ‘How to Get Your Deposit Back’ here.

Further guidance on deposits
• You will find a very helpful and detailed step by step summary of getting a deposit back on the Shelter website here.
• If you have a joint tenancy (with other students), you will find the following guidance helpful ‘Joint tenants: How to Get Your Deposit Back’.
• For challenging deposit deductions, check this helpful guide here.

For further guidance on deposits, contact The Advice Centre. · 02380 592 085 · advice@susu.org.

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