

## PRESS CUTTING

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11 August 2011

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A record number of complaints – 672 in total – were made against lettings agents last year, the most since the office was established 20 years ago. It is no surprise that complaints are at this level when so often communication between the landlord and tenant breaks down and the letting agent is caught in the middle, says the Association of Independent Inventory Clerks (AIIC).

What is clear from the cases handled by the Tenant Deposit Scheme, is that 81% of disputes over deposits are won by the tenant. Clearly, lettings agents and landlords need to protect themselves at the start, during and at the end of a tenancy agreement.

Time and time again, lettings agents and landlords fail to follow 'good practice' which will ensure the relationship with the tenant remains good from the start. Below are some very common areas for potential dispute:

- Letting contracts are not put in place, or they have very unfair clauses in the contract
- Landlords and lettings agents don't conduct an adequate check-in and check-out, or don't keep copies of correspondence with the tenant which could be used as evidence in a dispute
- There is no detailed inventory which enables both parties to be treated fairly and reasonably
- There is poor communication ongoing between the tenant and landlord/agent. This results in problems and issues not being dealt with in an acceptable manner and time frame during the tenancy. This inevitably leads to more serious problems and expense for both landlord/agent and tenant.
- The property is not maintained adequately by the landlord or letting agent

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Pat Barber, Chair of the AIIIC, said: "It is vital for landlords and agents to ensure they have ongoing dialogue with tenants and that they get all the paperwork right at the start and at the end of a new tenancy agreement.

"Aside from ensuring there is a fair contract in place at the start of a tenancy agreement, landlords should have a professional and detailed inventory which will enable both parties to be treated fairly and reasonably. By opening a dialogue and using an independent inventory clerk, disputes can be resolved quicker and without the hassle that is often experienced at the end of a tenancy period."

The AIIIC is a not for profit membership organisation and is committed to excellence and professionalism in the property inventory process. The AIIIC works hard to ensure that all landlords, tenants and letting agents understand the importance and benefits of professionally completed property inventories.

For further information, please visit [www.theaiic.co.uk](http://www.theaiic.co.uk)