

## Accidental landlords blamed for deposit dispute rise

**A rise in the number of disputes between tenants and landlords has been blamed in part on accidental landlords by the Association of Independent Inventory Clerks (AIIC).**

Early in 2010, the Dispute Service (TDS) reported a huge rise in the number of tenancy deposit disputes. In the TDS 2008 - 2009 report, TDS dealt with 7,068 disputes, up from 2,103 in the previous year.

The TDS report also highlighted that 'inventories are often absent or insufficiently thorough'. AIIC say accurate inventories often prevent the need for adjudication in the first place, or allow for prompt resolution of any dispute.

The AIIC also believes that landlords, especially



Fair wear and tear? Ask an inventory clerk.

accidental landlords, often have unrealistic expectations on wear and tear damage, which ultimately leads to a significant rise in tenant disputes.

According to the AIIC, new research shows that

21% of disputes are caused over a disagreement about how much of the deposit should be kept for things such as cleaning the bathroom or getting stains out of the carpet after the tenant is gone.

Pat Barber, Chair of the AIIC, said: "It is so important for landlords and lettings agents to ensure there is a professional independent inventory completed when checking in and checking out.

"However, landlords and tenants have different expectations when it comes to fair wear and tear issues, so it is no wonder that so many tenancies end in dispute."

"Members of the AIIC aim to help in assessing fair wear and tear and to take into account all factors and make a reasonable

judgement as to whether something is fair wear and tear or not.

"Landlords cannot expect 'new for old' when something is damaged as everything has an expectancy of useful life and will need to be replaced periodically at the landlords' expense.

"Tenants have a duty to return the property at the end of the tenancy in a condition consistent with that described on the inventory.

"An independent inventory 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."