A WORKS CO. MANUAL · NO. 14

The End-of-Tenancy Cleaning Works

How to build a business cleaning rentals to the check-out standard.

The Works Co. · Trade manuals

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A complete, honest guide to building an end-of-tenancy cleaning business in the UK — from your first deep clean to a steady run of referral work from letting agents and landlords.

Plain method, real numbers, no padding. Everything you need to register, set up, price, clean to the check-out standard, and win the agent relationships that keep the work coming.

How to use this manual

This is a working manual, not a book to read once and shelve. It is built to be opened on the job — on the phone to an agent, parked outside a flat working out a quote, or at the kitchen table on a Sunday doing your numbers. Read it once front to back so you have the whole picture. Then come back to the chapter you need, when you need it.

The chapters run in the order you will actually do things. Part One covers the opportunity, whether it suits you, and getting legal and insured. Part Two is the craft — your kit and the deep-clean method that passes an inventory check-out first time. Part Three is finding and serving customers. Part Four is the commercial heart of the trade: letting agents, landlords and student lets, the repeat-referral engine that turns one-off jobs into a steady income. Parts Five, Six and Seven take you into scaling, the 2026 tech stack, your first 90 days, and where the trade is heading.

Your purchase is three things, not one.

The manual. Fifteen chapters of method, numbers and judgement, written as if by someone who has run the jobs and dealt with the agents.

The 10-file Excel toolkit. The spreadsheets that do the admin so you do not have to build it. A self-assessment scorecard, a profit-and-loss tracker, a client and job tracker, a pricing calculator, the check-out cleaning checklist, a COSHH risk assessment, a quality and handover checklist, a quote and agent proposal template, a pipeline tracker, and a first-90-days checklist. Each one is referenced from the chapter that uses it. Appendix A is the index — start there to see what each file is for.

The 60-prompt AI library. Ready-to-use prompts for the admin that eats your evenings — writing quotes, drafting the agent introduction email, replying to enquiries, building checklists, and producing marketing copy. They are written so a non-technical operator can paste them into any common AI assistant and get usable output. Appendix B explains how to use them.

Use the manual for the thinking, the toolkit for the doing, and the prompts for the writing. They are designed to work together.

One more thing — our refund promise. If this is not for you, email refunds@theworksco.co.uk and we will refund you the same day, no questions and no friction. Keep the manual, the toolkit and the prompts. We would rather you spent the £47 on a coffee with someone you love than on a manual for a business that was never going to be yours. We also update the bundle for life: when prices, tax thresholds or methods change, you get the new version free.

Now turn the page, and let us look at why end-of-tenancy cleaning is worth your time.

PART ONE

The Foundations

Chapter 01

The End-of-Tenancy Opportunity

It is a Monday in March, just gone two in the afternoon, and Tracey is standing in the middle of an empty 2-bed flat in Coventry, peeling off her gloves. The oven, which three hours ago had a baked-on crust of last summer's roast dinners, now looks like it did the day it was fitted. The bathroom limescale is gone. The skirtings are dust-free, the internal windows are clear, the inside of every cupboard has been wiped. She has photographed each room. She walks through one last time against the checklist, locks up, and drops the keys back to the letting agent's branch on her way home.

The job paid £200 for the day. By the time she is back in the car her phone has buzzed: the agent has a 3-bed coming free on Thursday, the outgoing tenant wants it done before the check-out inspection, can she fit it in. She can. That one will be £260.

This is the shape of the work. One property, done properly, in a day. Paid for the result, not the hour. And the agent already lining up the next one. That last part — the agent texting before you have even got home — is the whole business in one moment. Everything in this manual is built to get you more of those texts.

What end-of-tenancy cleaning actually is

End-of-tenancy cleaning, or EOT, is the deep clean of a rented home when a tenancy ends. The tenant is moving out. Before they go, the property is cleaned back to what the trade calls the **move-out or inventory check-out standard** — the condition recorded when they first moved in. Get it to that standard and two things happen: the tenant gets their deposit back, and the landlord or agent can re-let the place quickly.

That is the job. It is not a quick tidy. It is the full deep clean — kitchen including the appliances and the oven, bathrooms, every room, inside cupboards and drawers, skirtings, doors, light fittings, internal windows. On top of the core clean you can sell add-ons: professional carpet cleaning, oven cleaning as a stand-alone, external windows, and Airbnb or holiday-let turnaround cleaning. We cover the method in Chapter 5 and the full add-on stack in Chapter 12.

The key thing to understand on day one is who you are really cleaning for. The tenant pays you, often, because they want their deposit. But the person who decides whether the work passed is the **inventory clerk doing the check-out inspection**. You are cleaning to a graded standard, judged by a third party against a written record. That is what makes EOT different from ordinary domestic cleaning, and it is what makes it worth more.

It also changes how you work. A domestic clean has to look clean to the person who lives there. A check-out clean has to survive a clipboard and a torch, room by room, against the inventory taken when the tenant first arrived. The clerk is not being unfair — they are doing their job, which is to record the condition honestly so the deposit is split fairly. Your job is to leave nothing for them to write down. When you understand that, you stop cleaning to "looks fine" and start cleaning to "passes". The two are not the same standard, and the gap between them is where deposits are lost and where your reputation is made.

Why this work, and why now

A regular domestic clean is priced by the hour and competes on price. There is always someone cheaper. EOT is different in four ways that matter to your income.

It is higher-value, priced per property. You are not selling hours. You are selling a finished result to a standard. A 2-bed flat is £160–£240 whether it takes you five hours or seven. Price it right, work efficiently, and the day pays well.

The real engine is referral work. A tenant is a one-off. They move out once and you may never see them again. But the **letting and estate agents, private landlords, student-accommodation providers and Airbnb hosts** behind them have properties turning over all year. Win one agent's trust and you are not getting one job — you are getting a steady stream of them. The one-off clean is the front door. The agent relationship is the house.

Demand is steady all year, with peaks. Tenancies end every month. People move constantly. But there are clear **turnover peaks** — the summer churn as students and the academic year reset, and the month-ends and quarter-days when tenancies commonly end. Year-round work with busy spells you can plan around.

The start cost is low and the admin is getting easier. You can begin for **£300–£1,500** of kit, covered in Chapter 4 — professional cleaning supplies, a good vacuum, a steam cleaner, microfibre cloths, a ladder, a caddy and PPE, plus a car or small van to carry it. A carpet-cleaning machine for the add-on can be bought or hired as the work comes in, so it need not be in your opening budget at all. And the paperwork that used to eat your evenings — quotes, agent emails, checklists, review replies — can now be drafted in seconds with AI. Your bundle includes a 60-prompt library built for exactly this. The cleaning is still done by hand. The admin around it no longer has to swallow your weekends.

> **COACH MOMENT** Notice what you are buying when you buy into this trade: not "cleaning" but *a reputation for passing check-out first time*. Every job is an audition for the agent's next ten jobs. From your very first clean, treat the finish as evidence. Photograph it. The day you stop thinking "this is one clean" and start thinking "this is the start of a relationship" is the day the business changes.

What you can earn

Be honest with yourself about which bracket you are aiming for, because they ask for different things from you. These are realistic UK figures for 2026.

Level	What it looks like	Annual figure
Part-time	Evenings and weekends, a handful of jobs a week, building reviews	**£12,000–£25,000**
Full-time solo	Steady agent and tenant work, you doing the cleaning	**£25,000–£45,000**
Small team / agency model	Cleaners working to your standard, you running the diary	**£60,000–£150,000+** revenue

A note on the third row: that is revenue, not what lands in your pocket. Once you employ cleaners, wages and the cost of quality control come out of it, and the re-clean risk is real — covered in Chapter 11. Plenty of operators are happiest and most profitable as a tidy full-time solo, clearing the £25,000–£45,000 band with low overheads and no staff headaches. Bigger is not automatically better. It is just a different business.

Here is how a single solid day actually adds up. Take Tracey's 3-bed on Thursday:

Item	Figure
3-bed EOT deep clean	£260
Carpet clean, two rooms (add-on at ~£30/room)	£60
Oven clean (stand-alone add-on)	£65
Day total	**£385**
Consumables used (chemicals, cloths, bags)	~£15

The add-ons did not just lift the total. They are also the easiest sale you will ever make, because the customer is already there, the property is already empty, and they want the whole thing done once. A tenant facing a deposit deduction for a stained carpet will gladly pay £60 to clean it rather than lose £300 from their deposit. The same logic sells the oven. You are not upselling for the sake of it — you are solving the exact problem the customer already has, on the day, in one visit. Chapter 7 covers pricing and quoting in full; Chapter 12 covers the add-on stack.

The model: one-off jobs, repeat referrals

It is worth being very clear about how the money flows, because it shapes every decision you make.

The **jobs** are mostly one-offs. A property turns over, you clean it, you move on. If you only ever chased one-off jobs you would spend your whole life finding the next stranger, and you would compete on price every single time. That is a hard way to make a living.

The **customers worth keeping** are the ones who send you those jobs again and again: the letting agent with forty properties on their books, the portfolio landlord with a dozen flats, the student-accommodation provider clearing fifty rooms every July. They do not move out. They send work. Get onto an agent's approved-contractor list and you stop selling and start receiving.

So the strategy across this whole manual is simple. Take the tenant jobs to earn now and build your portfolio of before-and-after results. Use those results to win one or two agent relationships. Then protect those relationships with absolute reliability, because they are worth more than any single job. Chapter 6 — the longest in the book — is built around landing that first agent. Chapters 9 and 10 are about winning and keeping them.

One more thing that separates the operators who last from the ones who burn out. Many agents and tenants are reassured by a simple promise: if the property fails its check-out on something you should have cleaned, you come back and put it right at no charge. The "re-clean if it fails" guarantee sounds frightening when you first read it, but in practice it costs you very little — because if you clean to the standard in Chapter 5, failures are rare — and it removes the agent's single biggest worry about using a new cleaner. It is the cheapest, strongest sales tool you own. We come back to it throughout the manual.

> **MENTOR MOMENT** I have watched people treat the agent like just another customer, and I have watched people treat the agent like gold. The difference in their businesses two years on is not small — it is the whole thing. An agent does not care if you are the cheapest. An agent cares that when they hand you keys on a Friday, the property passes check-out on Monday and they never have to think about it again. Reliability is the product. The clean is just how you deliver it.

Who this suits, and who it does not

We would rather tell you the truth now than take your £47 and let you find out the hard way.

This work suits you if you are:

- **Thorough and exacting** — you notice the smear on the glass and the dust on the skirting, and it bothers you until it is gone.
- **Physically up to it** — it is real graft: hours on your feet, kneeling, reaching, scrubbing ovens.
- **Reliable** — when you say Monday, you mean Monday. Agents live and die by this.
- **Trustworthy in empty homes** — you will hold keys and work alone in other people's empty properties, and you must be completely comfortable with that responsibility.
- **Calm under a deadline** — check-out is often booked. The clean has to be done and right before the clock runs out.

This work is not for you if you:

- Cut corners or talk yourself into "good enough". The inventory clerk will find it, and the agent will hear about it.
- Are slow, and stay slow. If a 2-bed takes you a whole day every time, the maths does not work.
- Are unreliable — late, cancelling, hard to reach. One missed agent job can end a relationship you spent months building.
- Dislike working alone, or feel uneasy in empty properties. You will do a lot of both.

None of this is meant to put you off. It is meant to make sure the person reading is the right person. If you read that first list and recognised yourself, you are exactly who this trade rewards. Chapter 2 has a proper self-assessment scorecard if you want to test it honestly.

How to use this manual, the Toolkit and the Prompt Library

You are holding three things, not one.

The manual is the thinking and the method — why the trade works, how to set up legally, how to clean to the check-out standard, how to win agents, how to grow. Read Part One and Part Two before you take a single job. Read the rest as you need it.

The 10-file Excel Toolkit is the doing. The self-assessment scorecard, the accounts tracker, the client and job database, the pricing calculator, the quote template, the quality and handover checklists, the 90-day checklist. Where a chapter needs one, it tells you — for example, the Pricing Calculator in Chapter 7 and the Client/Job tracker in Chapter 6.

The 60-prompt AI Library is the speed. Drafting an agent introduction email, turning a property's details into an accurate quote, writing a review reply, building a room checklist — these are the prompts that take the admin off your evenings. Chapter 13 shows you how to wire them into your day.

Use all three together. The manual tells you what to do, the Toolkit gives you the file to do it in, the prompts make the writing quick.

And the honest line we promised you: we would rather you spent the £47 on a coffee with someone you love than on a manual for a business that wasn't yours. If after reading this you decide EOT cleaning is not for you, email refunds@theworksco.co.uk the same day, keep all the materials, and we will refund you with no friction. Free updates for life if you stay. We only want your money if this is genuinely your business.

What success looks like in one year

Picture Tracey twelve months from that first Monday in Coventry.

She is registered, insured with the right cover, and has a DBS check that agents trust. She has a tight kit that fits in her car and a method that gets a 2-bed done to standard by mid-afternoon. She has a folder of before-and-after photos and a Google Business Profile with a wall of five-star reviews from tenants who got their full deposit back.

Most of all, she has two letting-agent branches who use her as their default cleaner. She is on their approved list. They send her three or four properties most weeks without her chasing, and she has never let them down on a check-out. Around that steady base she still takes private tenant jobs and the odd Airbnb turnaround, and she sells carpets and ovens on top of nearly every clean. She is clearing a comfortable full-time income, working in a way she controls, with a diary that fills itself.

That is not luck. It is the method in the chapters ahead, applied steadily. The next step is making sure this is the right business for you — so turn to Chapter 2, and let us be honest together about whether it is.

Chapter 02

Is This For You?

It is a Wednesday morning in Peterborough, and Marek is on his knees in an empty 2-bed flat off Lincoln Road, looking at the inside of an oven door with a torch. The kitchen behind him is finished. The bathroom is finished. The flat looks, to the naked eye, clean. But the oven door has a thin brown film baked into the corner of the glass, and Marek knows the inventory clerk who arrives at two o'clock will open that door, hold a checklist, and write one word that decides whether the outgoing tenant gets their £900 deposit back: "clean" or "soiled".

So Marek goes back in with the degreaser and a blade. Twenty more minutes. Nobody is watching. Nobody would ever know. He does it anyway, because that twenty minutes is the whole job. That habit — the willingness to redo the thing nobody would catch — is the single best predictor of whether you will make money at end-of-tenancy cleaning.

This chapter is here to help you decide, honestly, whether this trade fits the person you actually are. Not the person you would like to be. Reading Chapter 1 told you the opportunity is real. This chapter asks a harder question: is it real for you?

What this work actually is

End-of-tenancy cleaning is not domestic cleaning with a bigger price tag. A weekly domestic clean is judged by a busy homeowner who is pleased the kitchen looks tidy. An EOT clean is judged against an inventory check-out report — a written, photographed standard, often produced by an independent clerk, compared line by line against the check-in condition. The bar is not "looks nice". The bar is "no deductions".

That changes everything about the work.

It means the inside of the oven, the inside of the kitchen drawers, the limescale around the taps, the dust on top of the door frames, the skirting boards behind where the sofa stood, the smear on the internal window glass — all of it is graded. A homeowner forgives the top of a wardrobe. A check-out clerk runs a finger along it and writes it down. The deposit-protection schemes back the tenant when the property is returned in the same condition as check-in, fair wear and tear aside, so the agent and landlord lean on your work to defend a deduction or release a deposit cleanly.

You are, in effect, cleaning to pass an exam set by someone else, in an empty property, often alone, against the clock, because the next tenant moves in on Saturday. The full job covers the kitchen including appliances and oven, the bathrooms and their limescale, every room, inside cupboards and drawers, skirtings, doors, light fittings and internal windows. Get it right and the money is good — a 2-bed like Marek's flat sits in the £160–£240 band, a single focused day, with add-ons such as carpet cleaning at roughly £25–£40 a room or an oven clean at £55–£75 lifting the total. Get it wrong and the clerk fails the check-out, the agent calls you back to re-clean for free, and your reputation with that branch takes a knock you may not recover from.

That last point is worth sitting with, because it is what separates this trade from almost every other kind of cleaning. A regular domestic round is forgiving. Miss something this week and you put it right next week; the relationship survives. EOT work has no next week with that flat. You get one attempt at the standard before the clerk arrives, and if you fail it the cost is not only the unpaid re-clean — it is the agent quietly crossing you off the list and calling the cleaner who does not need calling back. The work is high-value precisely because it is unforgiving, and the people who thrive in it are the ones who treat every single job as the audition it is.

So the question "is this for you?" is really "are you the kind of person who will pass that exam, on a deadline, when no one is checking your work but the clerk?"

The green-light markers

You are well suited to this trade if most of the following are honestly true of you.

- **You are thorough and exacting.** You notice the smear, the streak, the missed corner — and it bothers you until it is gone. Detail is not a chore you tolerate; it is how you are wired.
- **You are fast and physically fit.** This is hours on your feet, on your knees, reaching, scrubbing, carrying kit up stairs. A full flat in a day means moving with purpose, not dawdling. Speed without slipping standards is the skill that pays.
- **You are reliable.** When you say Wednesday at nine, you are there Wednesday at nine. Agents re-let on tight timelines; a no-show or a late finish breaks their chain, not just your day.
- **You take genuine pride in a property passing its check-out.** The satisfaction of a clerk signing off with zero cleaning deductions is, for you, the point — not just the payment.
- **You are trustworthy with keys and empty homes.** You will hold keys to other people's property, let yourself in, and work unsupervised. You treat that access as the privilege it is, and you handle it carefully.
- **You can work alone for hours without flagging.** A lot of this is you, a radio or a podcast, and an empty flat. You are fine with that. You may even prefer it.

If you read that list and felt recognised — if "thorough and exacting" sounds like you on a normal Tuesday — that is the strongest signal in this whole manual that the trade fits.

> **COACH MOMENT** Do not confuse *wanting the income* with *having the temperament*. Plenty of people want £35,000 a year cleaning flats; far fewer will redo Marek's oven door at half past one with the clerk on the way. Before you spend a penny on kit, sit with the green-light list and be ruthlessly honest about which markers are genuinely you and which you are hoping to become. The trade rewards who you already are far more than who you intend to be.

The red flags

Now the harder half. You will struggle in this trade — and you should think carefully before committing money to it — if any of the following ring true.

- **You cut corners when you are tired or rushed.** Everyone is tempted at the end of a long flat. The operators who last are the ones who do not give in. If "good enough" is your reflex under pressure, the check-out standard will expose it, repeatedly, in writing.
- **You are slow and lose track of time.** If a job that should take six hours routinely takes you nine, your day rate collapses and you start arriving late to the next booking. Pace is not optional here; it is the difference between a £200 day and an unprofitable one.
- **You are unreliable with commitments.** If you cancel, run late, or go quiet when an agent texts, you will lose the referral relationship that is the entire engine of this business. Agents forgive a missed corner faster than they forgive being let down.
- **You are uncomfortable working alone in empty properties.** Some people find an empty, unfamiliar flat unsettling — the quiet, the isolation, the unfamiliar street. If that is you, a job built almost entirely on lone working in strangers' empty homes will wear you down.
- **You resent being graded.** If having your work inspected and marked against a checklist feels like an insult rather than the job, the constant scrutiny of check-out clerks will grind you down within months.

None of these makes you a bad person. They make you a bad fit for *this* trade, and knowing that now — before the £47, before the kit, before the first agent call — is worth far more than discovering it after you have invested a month and £1,200.

> **MENTOR MOMENT** I have watched capable, hard-working people fail at this for one reason: they were sociable and needed people around them. They were not lazy. They were not careless. They simply could not spend day after day alone in empty flats, and the loneliness drained them until the standard slipped.
> Honesty about your temperament is not weakness. The most useful thing this

chapter can do is talk one wrong-fit reader out of the trade before they lose money — and point them at something that suits them better. We mean that.

The honest reality

Let me be plain about what the brochures leave out.

This is hard, physical work. You will finish flats with your knees aching and your hands dry from chemicals, even with gloves. You will clean ovens that have not been touched in two years, bathrooms with limescale you have to dissolve and scrape, and the occasional property left in a state that turns your stomach. You will do it in summer heat with the windows the only ventilation, and in January with no heating on because the tenancy has ended and the gas is off.

And every job is graded by someone else's standard, not yours. You can think a flat looks immaculate and still have a clerk flag the extractor filter or the inside of the washing-machine drawer. That is not the clerk being difficult; that is the standard, and the standard is the product you sell. Chapter 5 teaches the systematic room-by-room method that gets you through a check-out first time, and the common deposit-dispute failure points to watch — but no method removes the fact that you are being marked, every job, against a written bar.

The reward for accepting all that is real. A part-time operator fitting jobs around other commitments can expect £12,000–£25,000 a year. A full-time solo operator with steady agent and tenant work earns £25,000–£45,000 a year, on a start cost of as little as £300 to £1,500 — no premises, no stock to speak of, kit you can carry in a car. Build a small team or an agency model and revenue can run from £60,000 to well over £150,000. Demand is steady year-round and peaks at tenancy turnover — summer student churn, month-ends, quarter-days. The work is there. The question is only whether you are built to do it to the standard the work demands.

And the deadline pressure is not occasional; it is the norm. Tenancies end and begin on the same date far more often than not. A flat that becomes empty on a Friday is frequently re-let for the following Monday, which means your window to clean it to check-out standard is a single working day, sometimes shared with a check-out inspection booked the same afternoon. You will rarely have the luxury of coming back tomorrow to finish. You plan the job, you bring everything you need, and you finish it in the time you have — or you do not get the work again.

Score yourself honestly

Reading two lists is one thing. Marking yourself against them is another. Toolkit file 01, the **Self-Assessment Scorecard**, turns the green-light markers and red flags above into a short scored questionnaire. You rate yourself on each — thoroughness, speed, fitness, reliability, comfort working alone, trustworthiness with keys, your honest reaction to being graded — and the sheet totals it into a clear read on your fit.

Do it now, before you go further into the manual. Do it honestly; the only person a flattering score hurts is you, three weeks and several hundred pounds from now. A few practical ways to keep yourself honest:

- Answer as you behaved on your *worst* recent day, not your best. The trade tests you on bad days.
- Where you are unsure, ask someone who has worked alongside you. They know whether you cut corners under pressure better than you do.
- Treat a low score on reliability or being-graded as a stop sign, not a rounding error. Those two sink more operators than slow cleaning ever does.

If you score well, the rest of this manual is your build plan: Chapter 3 gets you legal and insured, Chapter 4 sorts your kit, Chapter 5 teaches the standard, and Chapter 6 — the longest and most important — shows you how to win your first clients and the agent relationships that turn one-off jobs into steady weekly work. If you score poorly on the markers that matter most, take that seriously. It may be the most valuable thing this manual tells you.

If this is not your trade

Here is the part most manuals would never write, because most manuals just want your money.

If you have read this chapter honestly and the red flags describe you better than the green lights, this is probably not your trade — and we would far rather you knew that today than after you had built half a business you secretly dreaded. We would rather you spent the £47 on a coffee with someone you love than on a manual for a business that was never going to be yours.

So here is our promise, and we mean it plainly. If you decide, for any reason, that this is not for you, email refunds@theworksco.co.uk the same day and we will refund your £47 with no friction and no questions. Keep the manual, keep the toolkit, keep the prompt library — they are yours either way. We would genuinely rather give you your money back than take it for a path that does not suit you. A refund costs us a little. A bad fit costs you a great deal more.

And if you scored well — if Marek going back to the oven door at half past one made you nod rather than wince — then you have the temperament this trade rewards. The rest is learnable: the kit, the method, the pricing, the agent outreach. Turn to Chapter 3, and let us get you set up properly: registered, insured, and ready to hold your first set of keys.

That was Chapter 1.

The other twenty chapters, the Excel toolkit and the

AI prompt library are in the full bundle.