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Landlord's Patio Cleaning Claim Rejected in Tenancy Dispute

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A recent tenancy dispute has highlighted the complexities of claiming expenses for external cleaning, specifically, pressure washing a patio. The case, adjudicated through a deposit protection scheme, underscores the importance of evidence and the condition of a property at the tenancy's outset.

The landlord sought to deduct costs from the tenant's deposit for power-washing a patio, a common maintenance task often neglected by tenants. However, the tenant countered that the landlord was unfairly claiming for cleaning areas of the patio that were already clean due to their children's playful use of a pressure washer.

At the start of the tenancy, the patio was far from pristine, covered with a thin layer of algae and grime, which strengthened the landlord's position. By the tenancy's end, the tenant's children had used a pressure washer to clean their names, along with flowers and butterflies, into the dirty surface, creating patches of clean amid the filth. The landlord conceded the patio's initial poor condition but argued that removing the children's "artwork" required a full power wash. The tenant, however, maintained they were being charged for technically clean areas, challenging the fairness of the claim.

The adjudicator ruled against the landlord, determining that no deduction could be made. The patio's dirty state at the tenancy's start meant that cleaning the entire area would result in betterment, which tenancy adjudication principles prohibit. The decision rested on the fact that the landlord could not claim for improving the property beyond its original condition.