

PESTS



TENANT INFORMATION GUIDE

Pests

Pests in your home

Common pests found in homes around the UK are primarily rodents such as rats or mice, and insects such as bedbugs and cockroaches. Pests can be very distressing in your home. This guide aims to outline how we can support and respond to reports of pests.

It is important you take steps to reduce the risk of pests being attracted into your home; this can include ensuring food waste is not left around your home.

When a home is infested with pests, the quality of this home is compromised. It is a cause of anxiety and distress to residents and depending on the type of pest and level of infestation can also become a concern for public health.

We've identified some pests found in UK homes below, outlining how you can identify specific insects and rodents and what we can do in these instances.

Cockroaches

Cockroaches are common in the UK. London is especially susceptible to cockroach infestations as the city is heavily populated, and homes are often in flats and communal blocks.

It is vital you report these instances of infestation as eradicating cockroaches can be challenging, and is easier at the first signs of infestation.



Pests

Cockroaches:

Cockroaches are usually between 15mm-25mm in length with long antennae. They breed rapidly and tolerate different habitats. There may be signs of cockroaches in your home if you see:

- Cockroach droppings – Cockroaches leave behind the dust of black droppings less than 1mm wide of varying lengths
- Smear marks – Check for marks on horizontal surfaces and at wall-floor junctions where cockroaches may be active
- Shed skin – Cockroaches may shed their skin as they mature to adulthood
- Damage – Look for unusual signs of damage to food packaging, leather or books
- Unusual odour – An established cockroach infestation produces a lingering or unpleasant musty smell that taints items they encounter



You can take certain effective precautions to ensure you remain cockroach free. This includes keeping food stored securely, emptying food bins, keeping bins clean, taking care of water or spillages and cleaning any debris.

Please report any signs of infestation to our Customer Services Team so we can propose the correct course of action. If left unchecked, cockroaches may spread. Pest control is paid for through your service charges; we will commission pest control specialists to respond in instances of infestation.

Bedbugs:

Becoming aware of a possible bedbug infestation can be very distressing, often affecting your health and wellbeing. We take these reports seriously and ensure we act appropriately in these cases.

Bedbugs are found across the UK and all throughout the year. They measure between 4mm-7mm and may be visible. They may appear yellow or translucent, or bright red. They are commonly found in beds but can be found in other places. They are good at hiding so if you identify signs of bedbugs, it is important you report these straight away. Bedbugs reproduce very quickly and are very small, so controlling an infestation is vital.

Signs of bedbugs may include:

- Eggs – Tiny, pale poppy seed shapes which may be found in bed linen, seams, or tufts of a mattress
- Bites – Red bumps clustered in a row often on neck, arms, or legs
- Blood – Spots of blood on your bedding
- Feces – Dark brown coloured droppings that stain material and mattresses
- Smell – They may release a musty or sweet odour

You can avoid the recurrence of bedbugs by washing clothes or bedding at high temperatures, keeping your home clean and tidy, and being careful when purchasing secondhand furniture or mattresses.

If you suspect any of these signs, please report your concerns to our Customer Services Team. We will need to engage a specialist pest control service to conduct a survey, propose appropriate treatment, conduct the programme of operation, and sign off on the completion of the treatment. If left, bedbugs may spread. Pest control is paid for through your service charges, so please contact us to appropriately treat these issues.

During the time that an infestation has been identified, please double bag all your waste and take it outside straight away. You can also run all bedding including pillows or clothes on a hot wash.



Pests

Rats:



Rats typically have brown or grey fur, but their colour can vary from white to black. An adult rat may appear between 200-270mm in length, plus a tail of 150-200mm. Rats typically search for food, water, and shelter. They may live in roof spaces, wall cavities, or under floorboards; they also burrow into gardens or sewer systems. Rats often gnaw through packaging and can spoil or contaminate food with urine, droppings, or hair, so be careful if you identify rats and keep your food safely stored.

Signs of rats may include:

- Sightings of live rats or droppings – Rats are active at night but may be seen during the day searching for food, water, or shelter. Common rat droppings are tapered at both ends, black in colour, and around 12mm long.
- Trails – Footprints, smears, or tail swipes can be seen on muddy or dusty surfaces, smears are often seen as dark grey marks.
- Gnawing – Rats gnaw continually to wear down their front teeth, often on food packaging, but also on electrical cables, pipework, and wooden fixtures.
- Urine Odour – Rodent urine has a musky strong odour.

You can assist in preventing rat infestations by taking a number of precautions – reporting gaps in your home to deny rats access to your home, removing household waste and cleaning bins to minimise interest in your home.

Rats can cause damage due to gnawing and burrowing and can carry disease. Any sign of rats must be reported to us as soon as possible so we can arrange for pest control. Please contact our Customer Services Team to arrange for appropriate treatment and action.



Pests

Mice:

The most common mouse found in buildings in the UK is the house mouse, often displaying light brown or grey fur. Their body length ranges between 60-90mm and their tails may add 100mm. Mice live in nests that they build out of cloth, wool, or paper, this may be in roof spaces, under floorboards, or in wall cavities. Mice can squeeze through cracks as small as 5mm, but mice holes are usually 20-30mm in diameter. Mice are usually active at night and can be heard running searching for food. Mice can spoil food with urine or droppings, please be careful if you identify food that mice may have interacted with.



Signs of a mice infestation may include:

- Mice Droppings – Droppings are often black, rod shaped and 3-6mm long. Mice often leave lots of droppings in their tracks.
- Smears – Dark grey marks left on surfaces.
- Nests – Nests may be found indoors but are often not in sight.
- Gnawing – Mice gnaw continually on material such as wood, carpets, paper, pipe cables, and furniture. They will also gnaw food packaging in cupboards.
- Urine Odour – Mice urinate frequently and their urine has a strong ammonia-like smell.



You can take measures to prevent mice infestations such as keeping your home in good repair, alerting us to any gaps or repairs, cleaning bins and removing household waste.

Mice must be controlled as they can cause damage and can carry diseases. If you identify any signs of mice, please contact our Customer Services Team so we can appropriately treat the infestation. We have specialist pest control to respond in these instances and aim to respond quickly to treat any identified issues.

Pests

Our Process:

When we receive a report or reports of the presence of one of the above pests, we will commission specialist advice from a pest control contractor. We will carry out such treatment as recommended by specialist contractors to rid the property of pests as quickly as possible.

The contractor may also recommend ancillary works such as works to prevent pests from entering the building, for example blocking up holes in external walls, replacing broken vents or filling cracks or gaps that pests can get through. These are called proofing works, and we will arrange for these to be carried out, usually by a building contractor.



Resident Responsibilities:

You are responsible for keeping your home clean and tidy and for keeping any garden and outside area forming part of your tenancy in a reasonable state. You should not do anything which could attract pests such as leaving out food or rubbish. Should an infestation occur and we contact you for access, as required under the terms and conditions of your tenancy, you are obliged in your own interest and that of your neighbours to provide access for our contractors and staff to enable treatment to be carried out and for subsequent monitoring to make sure treatment has been effective.

We do not normally become involved in eradicating insects such as silverfish, ants, beetles, slugs or flies (this is not an exhaustive list) as they are not considered to be harmful or pose a health risk.