

# Domestic Pest Control Treatments

## **Q. Why is it necessary to reduce the subsidy?**

**A.** Pest Control is not a statutory function that local authorities have to legally provide. Due to increased financial pressures this area of work has recently come under review. As part of the review, a decision was made to reduce the subsidy to enable this valued service to continue.

## **Q. How have the charges been set?**

**A.** Whilst charges have been kept as low as possible, they do not cover the full cost of the treatment. We have tried to ensure our prices are below those of commercial companies, although this is difficult as they do not operate transparent pricing policies, and prices vary significantly from company to company and even from job to job. By setting out our charges up front, you know the cost of the treatment and avoid any hidden extras.

## **Q. What constitutes a treatment?**

**A.** A maximum of 2 visits for rats and mice (most domestic infestations can be cleared in 2 to 3 visits). C will be charged per extra visit where the infestation is particularly heavy and more visits are required. Treatment should be carried out in conjunction with preventative measures and at the end of treatment the Pest Control Officer may offer advice, which should be followed to prevent re-infestation.

Treatment to eradicate rats and mice cannot be guaranteed for periods longer than two weeks as rats and mice are opportunist and may re-infest an area previously inhabited by another rat colony. If the problem recurs more than 2 weeks after the conclusion of treatment, a further charge will be made.

Wasp nests are a one off treatment, but do include a free re-visit within 7 days if the nest is still active.

Your Pest Control Officer will advise and agree with you the number of visits required and the cost of treatment of infestations of cockroaches, bed bugs, fleas and other insects. This can vary depending on the severity of the infestation and the treatment required.

A treatment for squirrels typically involves the use of traps for a 2 week period.

**Q. Who decides when the treatment has finished?**

**A.** The Pest Control Officer will use their professional knowledge and expertise to determine when the pests have been eradicated and the treatment is finished.

**Q. Why are you charging for advice?**

**A.** Pest Control Officers are spending more time giving people advice, which is preventing them from carrying out treatments and resulting in customers having to wait longer. We are now charging for an advisory visit, although this will be deducted from the cost of any treatment should it be necessary. The deduction only applies if the treatment is taken up at the time of the advisory visit.

**Q. Do Housing Association tenants have to pay for treatments?**

**A.** Yes, housing Association (including Merlin Housing Society) tenants have to pay for treatment. However, landlords may be responsible if the problem is as a result of structural defects. Tenants should take this up with their landlord.

**Q. Are there any concessions?**

**A.** Because the charges are subsidised, the only concession is for the treatment of rats due to the public health significance of a rat infestation. Rats are known to carry up to 40 different diseases, and parasites. Concessions are available for customers on Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit), Income Support and Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.

**Q. How do I pay for treatment?**

**A.** Payment should be made by credit or debit card when you request treatment (01454 868001).

**Q. Can you invoice me for the cost of the treatment?**

**A.** Yes, due to the cost to the Council of administering and raising an invoice an additional charge will apply to all invoices. Please enquire for further details.

**Q. Can I pay by cash?**

**A.** No, due to safety concerns, we do not want our Pest Officers carrying cash in their vans. We have facilities to take credit and debit card payment over the phone when the treatment is requested, or by your Pest Officer when they visit.

**Q. Do I have to use the Council's Pest Control Service?**

**A.** No, there are a number of private pest control companies operating in the area. These can be found under 'Pest Control' in the telephone directory. You are advised to seek a number of quotes before appointing a contractor.

All Council Pest Control Officers are suitably qualified and experienced (Royal Society for the Promotion of Health Certificate in Pest Control) and are covered by the Council's insurance policy.

**Q. Can I treat the problem myself?**

**A.** Yes, you may be able to treat minor pest problems using products available from garden centres or DIY stores. However, when using pesticides always follow the instructions on the label and be aware of the risks to other wildlife, pets, livestock and humans. **Please note:** it is important that if you treat the problem yourself, you must use sufficient rodenticides to fully eradicate the problem; otherwise it may lead to poison resistance in the rodent population.

**Q. What if someone else is attracting the rats/mice?**

**A.** If the pest problem is on your land, you will be responsible for the cost of the treatment, as you have a legal responsibility to keep your land free of rodents. If however, we feel that the condition of neighbouring land/premises may be encouraging the problem, the Council may serve notice on the owner or occupier, requiring them to take specified steps to keep their land free of mice or rats.

These powers can be used to require landowners to remove rubbish, where it can be established that the rubbish is attracting vermin, or providing harbourage.

**Q. How can I minimise the problems with rats on my property?**

**A.** There are several things that you need to do to minimise the likelihood of further problems with rats and mice;

- Accumulations of waste materials and rubbish can attract rodents. Ensure all waste (especially food waste) is disposed of promptly and appropriately.
- Avoid leaving large amounts of food out for the birds, especially if scattered on the ground. Only leave enough food that can be eaten in one day and do not leave food out over night. Where possible use hanging feeders and ensure you feed the birds in moderation.
- Where pet food is stored in outbuildings use lidded metal containers and clean up all spills immediately.
- Clean up spills from under internal and external animal cages on a daily basis.
- Use fine mesh chicken wire (< 10mm) on animal cages and under compost bins to prevent rats gaining access.
- Block any holes around air vents or piping.
- Keep outer doors closed.
- Fit cone guards around the bottom of drainpipes.
- Fit metal balloon guards to the top of drainpipes.
- Pick up fallen fruits in the Autumn

**For Treatment Tel: 01454 868001**

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