

# Waste and rodents

## What to do if you or your neighbour has a problem with a build up of rubbish and waste

### Removing rubbish

Waste materials and rubbish, if stored incorrectly, can give rats, mice and other vermin a place to live (harbourage) and become a breeding ground.

To avoid this we should all ensure waste (especially food waste) is disposed of promptly into the bin.

Build up of rubbish which may also cause a statutory nuisance are those which include items that could result in a risk to health or nuisance to neighbouring properties. For example:

- any build up of refuse sacks containing food waste which gives rise to unpleasant odours and flies
- rotting food or materials which may attract rats or other vermin
- rubbish which may provide harbourage for rats and mice.

Those that would not usually cause a statutory nuisance include overgrown gardens or build up of inert matter such as fridges, car parts, builders' rubble, broken glass and scrap iron.

### Complaints procedure

All initial complaints are taken by the council's call centre (01204 336500), who will require the following details:

- name, full address and telephone number of the person making complaint
- the address of the problem property or land and exact location of the rubbish and waste
- whether the property is vacant or occupied
- what the rubbish and waste consists of.

If it is decided that there are grounds to take action, a letter will be sent to the person being complained about requesting that they remove the rubbish and waste within ten days.

A letter will also be sent to the person making the complaint requesting that they inform the council if the rubbish and waste has not been removed after the ten day period. If no further contact is received within fourteen days it will be assumed that the rubbish and waste has been removed, therefore the case will be closed and no further action taken.

If the rubbish remains after the ten days, the person making the complaint must inform the Council that the rubbish has not been removed. An officer will then visit the site to establish whether a statutory nuisance exists. If a statutory nuisance is found to exist the officer will require the person responsible for the rubbish or the owner of the land to remove the rubbish. The council have powers to serve legal notices for the removal of the rubbish and if not complied with, can remove the rubbish, recover costs from the person responsible and prosecute the offender.

### Rats and mice

Rats and mice pose a risk to public health and their numbers need to be minimised for the following reasons:

- they can carry and transmit diseases that are hazardous to both humans and animals – diseases such as Weils disease, e.coli and salmonella
- rats and mice can cause damage to homes, gardens, sheds and garages
- they eat and contaminate all types of food.

## Signs of infestations

The signs of a rat or mouse infestation include droppings, seeing footprints in damp soil or dust, and burrows in the ground. There may also be signs of gnawing and 'smear marks' along routes they travel.

## Life cycle

Rats and mice usually live for 12 to 18 months. Rats are able to breed every two to three months and can produce a litter of eight to 12 offspring each time. Mice begin to breed at one to two months of age and their litters tend to be smaller but more frequent therefore populations can increase even more rapidly than rats.

## Prevention

- Always put your household waste into your wheelie bin and close the lid.
- Avoid leaving large amounts of food out for the birds, especially if scattered on the ground.
- Do not leave food out overnight.
- Where pet food is stored in outbuildings use lidded metal containers and clean up all spills immediately.

## Treatment

Rats can live in drains and sewers and many problems are often associated with drainage faults.

It is important that repairs are carried out promptly in order to prevent further spread of the rodent problem. Once out of the sewer, rats can seek shelter above ground in compost heaps, dumped rubbish, overgrown gardens or wasteland.

Although treatments are available in shops, we recommend that you seek treatment either from the council's pest control service (01204 336500) who operate free rat/mice treatments for domestic properties, or a private pest control company (this will incur a charge).

Please be aware that it is necessary to lay rodent bait when dealing with rats and it is essential that bait is positioned safely so the poison is not accessible to children or other animals. If there is no safe place to bait, other ways to control the problem may have to be considered.

If using your own rodent bait, always follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Remember to wash your hands after use.

Where deemed necessary by the council, legal notices under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act or the Public Health Acts may be served, to require a person(s) to treat or take necessary steps to eradicate the vermin. If the works are not carried out within the time specified the council may arrange for the works and recover all costs from the person(s) responsible.

## Further help and advice

If you require any further help or advice in relation to accumulations or pest issues please contact the Housing & Public Health team on 01204 336500 or e mail [housingandpublichealth@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:housingandpublichealth@bolton.gov.uk).

Please ask if you need this leaflet in large print or translated

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