

# **PEST CONTROL DEPARTMENT**

## **RATS AND MICE**

Mice are normally active at night, and you may not see them during the day. You may find nests, which are made of materials such as paper and look like a ball of material loosely woven together. You may find partially nibbled food and small droppings which are the size of a grain of rice.

An adult house mouse weighs about 30 grams (1 ounce) and is about 90 mm long (3 ½ inches) excluding the tail. It has brown fur on its back and is grey underneath. It has fairly large ears in relation to its body and small feet. The tail alone is roughly the same length as the head and body.

Rats are also nocturnal. Droppings which are kidney bean shaped and up to 12mm long are the most common sign of rats along with evidence of gnawing, tracks, burrows and nests.

An adult rat may weigh from 100 to 500 grams (3 ½ to 18 ounces). They are about 240mm long (9 ½ inches) excluding the tail. They have brown fur on their back and grey fur underneath. They have a tail which is shorter than its head and body. Sometimes young rats are mistaken for mice, the way to tell the difference is to look at the size of their feet which are big, tail which is shorter and fatter and ears which are smaller than the ears of a mouse.

Mice and rats contaminate the environments in which they live through their urine, droppings and hairs. They can carry a wide range of diseases that can be passed on to humans, either by directly contaminating food with droppings and urine, or by contaminating surfaces.

Rats in particular can pass on Weil's disease, which can be fatal to humans, they can also cause extensive structural damage to property. They are capable of gnawing a range of materials including electric cables and wiring, which could cause fire or electrocution.

## **CONTROL MEASURES**

Mice and rats may be discouraged and infestations prevented by improving hygiene and by blocking access points to your home.

- Make sure that air bricks are in place and intact (do not block them)
- Look for access points around gas, electricity and water pipes
- Check that doors fit tightly
- Fit cone guards around the bottom of drainpipes to prevent rats from climbing up – you'll be able to get these from your local hardware or DIY store.
- Fit metal balloon guards to the bottom of drainpipes to prevent them climbing up the inside – again, you can get these from your local hardware store.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION SHEET No2**

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There are two methods of control available:

- Trapping
- Poison baiting

## **CONTROLLING RATS**

Before you attempt to deal with a rat problem try to find out where rats are living, feeding and drinking, and the routes they take between these areas.

Look for the following signs

- Holes and burrows
- Runs and tracks
- Droppings
- Footprints
- Other signs such as sightings or a musky smell

Find out how the rats are getting into your home – this can be done by blocking any holes with newspaper and coming back 24 hours later to see which holes have been re-opened.

You can then take preventative action to permanently block the access holes.

## **TREATMENT**

The council provides treatment free of charge for dealing with rats and mice. To arrange a visit from the Pest Control Department please contact us on 01254 388 111 or alternatively you can email us on [env\\_health@hyndburnbc.gov.uk](mailto:env_health@hyndburnbc.gov.uk)