



How to prevent mice and rats living in your home

Mice

There are two commonly found species of mice: house mice and field mice. House mice are light brown to grey and between 60 and 90mm long. Field mice are sandy /orange brown and between 80 and 100mm long. Mice eat and excrete on food surfaces, spreading germs which can cause food poisoning, such as salmonella. Mice will eat most types of food found in kitchens, but prefer cereals and grains.

Rats

The most common UK species is the common or brown rat. Rats will seek out any environment that provides food, water and shelter and contaminate food with diseases which can be transmitted to humans. Rat gnawing and burrowing can damage buildings and other structures.

What to look out for around your home

During the winter months house mice live in nests in areas such as lofts or under floor boards. Field mice rarely enter buildings preferring to nest in outhouses, lofts or under floor boards. Rats live in cellars, loft spaces, wall cavities or under floor boards and can burrow under grassy banks, in compost heaps or under sheds.

Signs of mice include:

- Droppings – these are black, look like grains of rice, about 3 – 6mm long
- Gnawed damage to food packaging
- A distinctive odour in areas where mice live in large numbers
- Paper or cloth balled up to make a nest
- Scratching noises in cavities such as lofts or under floorboards
- Black greasy marks on surfaces.

Signs of rats include:

- Cigar-shaped droppings about 1cm long
- Signs of gnawing
- Footprints, tail swipes or dark grey smears from rat fur left on surfaces
- Holes - between 7 – 120mm found under tree roots, drain cover surrounds, grassy banks and the edges of paving



How to prevent mice and rats

- Mice can squeeze through openings as small as 0.6mm and rats through gaps of less than 2.5cm, so repair or fill gaps beneath external doors, around air vents or external pipes. These can be filled with wire wool or mesh (DO NOT BLOCK AIR VENTS).
- Mice are excellent climbers so trim back wall climbing plants.
- Clear up food spillages immediately, store food in sealed containers and move household refuse outside regularly. Ensure waste is stored in wheelie bins for collection.
- Clear overgrown, untidy gardens and avoid the build-up of rubbish or large items around your house.
- Place compost bins on a wire base to keep rodents out and don't put food waste in compost bins.
- Environmental cleanliness issues, such as fly tipping, overflowing bins or litter left outside takeaways, can also lead to rat infestations, so please report any local incidents to Knowsley Council by ringing 0151 443 2400.

Treating and controlling mice and rats

Knowsley Council Pest Control Service offers a service for the treatment of mice and rats in domestic and commercial properties.

For further information ring 0151 443 2400 or visit

www.knowsley.gov.uk/residents/bins-waste-and-environment/book-pest-control-appointment