

There may be times when you find pests in your home. We understand it is not pleasant and it is really important that we work together to try and make sure your home is free of infestations. Even the cleanest homes can be host to unwelcome visitors, no matter how careful you are.

Whose responsibility is it?

Dealing with a pest infestation is usually your responsibility as a resident. It is Willow Tree Housing Partnership Limited's (WTHP) responsibility as a landlord to deal with any infestation in an internal communal area, which affects more than one property in a building, or where access is through a defect in the fabric of the building. There are three simple rules to follow to prevent unwelcome pests in your home:-

1. **Do not let them in** – if you see any external holes, or believe rats, mice or squirrels are gaining access to your home, please call us and let us know. Rats, mice and squirrels, looking for a warm place to sleep or nest can use any external holes to get in.
2. **Do not feed them** – keep your home clean, especially the kitchen. Do not leave any food uncovered or easy to access. Put rubbish out in sealed bin bags or bins, and if applicable please ensure you use any communal bins provided.
3. **Do not make them feel welcome** – avoid leaving any bulky items or waste outside or in communal areas as these can provide places for mice and rats to nest. You can ask your local council to collect any bulky household waste if you cannot take it to the tip yourself.

Mice and Rats

Mice and rats can cause damage to your home and furnishings and chew through electrical wires, increasing the risk of fire and electrocution. They are most active at night, which makes it easier to spot signs of a problem, rather than the rodent itself. You may be able to keep mice under control using traps or poison and you can buy these in most DIY stores. Contact your local council to find out if they provide a service to remove rats and mice: www.gov.uk/report-pest-problem.

If you have rats you should call WTHP so that we can see what action we can take to deal with them.

Cockroaches

Cockroaches can lurk in warm, dark, humid parts of homes, in areas around pipe ducts in kitchens, and bathrooms or underneath cookers. They can cause food poisoning and other health problems. You may need expert help to deal with cockroaches. Further information on cockroaches and how to deal with them can be found on the British Pest Control Association website: www.bcpa.org.uk.

Fleas

Fleas from pet cats and dogs do not spread disease, but flea bites can be itchy and uncomfortable for you and your pets. To deal with fleas, treat your pets, bedding, furniture and carpets with flea sprays or powders. If you are unsure of which type to use, you may wish to speak to a vet for advice.

Bedbugs

Bedbugs live in bedding and mattresses and can leave nasty bite marks. Wash all bedding at 60°C and try to find an insecticide that is safe to use on the mattress, headboard and other affected areas.

Ants

Tackle them using an ant spray or powder which you can purchase in most DIY stores. Treat the nest if you can find it. You may be able to locate it by following the trail of ants. If you cannot reach the nest, treat all entry points to your home (doors, windows and drains). The ants should carry the insecticide back to their nest.

Bees and Wasps

Bees are not technically classed as pests. Honeybees must not be killed as they are protected by law, but they may be re-homed with a local beekeeper.

If you think you have a honeybee swarm, please contact the National Beekeepers Association which provides help and advice. You can find your local beekeeping association on their website:

www.bbka.org.uk/find-beekeeping-near-you.

Wasps only become a problem if they build nests in the loft or eaves of your home, cavity wall space, or in your garden. Do not go near to, or disturb a nest as bees and wasps can swarm when they feel threatened and may attack when disturbed.

Bees and wasp nests in communal areas will be dealt with by WTHP, please inform WTHP of any nests that you find.

Moths and Carpet Beetles

Tiny holes in your clothing could be a sign that you have an infestation of moths particularly if found in clothes made of wool and silk. It is the larvae that cause the damage as adult moths do not feed on fabrics. You can buy moth traps and place them in any wardrobes and cupboards where you store your clothes. Washing all your clothes will kill the eggs. Carpet beetles can damage woollen carpets or rugs in your home. You can buy kits to tackle them from homeware or DIY stores.

Dust Mites

Dust mites live in mattresses and bedding, they can make your symptoms worse if you suffer from eczema, asthma or any other breathing problems. Dust mites prefer warm, humid environments. To keep them under control, wash your bedding regularly at 60°C and try to keep your bedroom cool and well ventilated.

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