

# Dealing with pests in your home

**This factsheet considers what steps you can take to deal with pests and vermin if you are renting your home.**

Pests and vermin in your home can cause health and safety problems. They include rats, mice, cockroaches, wasps, ants, fleas, bedbugs, dust mites, silverfish and squirrels.

## Prevention

Any home can have a problem with pests or vermin, however careful you are and how often you clean your home. Prevention is better than cure. Follow three simple rules to reduce the chances of pests and vermin coming to stay:

- don't let them in - block up holes in the brickwork, roof, skirting boards
- don't feed them - keep your home clean, especially kitchen surfaces
- don't make them comfy - remove old furniture or other rubbish in your garden.

## Landlord's responsibility

It can be your landlord's responsibility to deal with a pest or vermin infestation if it's caused by conditions in your rented home.

Furnished private rented property must be fit to live in at the start of the tenancy. If the problem with pests or vermin was there when you first moved into a furnished home, your landlord must deal with it.

If your tenancy agreement says the landlord must make sure your home is 'fit to live in' or 'in a good condition', it's usually your landlord's responsibility to deal with problems with pests.

If you have to deal with the problem yourself because your landlord does nothing, you could then take your landlord to court to get compensation.

## Pest control services

Your council's environmental health team may provide a pest control service. If you are not sure what the pest is, some councils will identify it for you. If they do, make sure the pest is dead and is in a sealed container when you send or take it to the council.

Most councils charge for their pest control and pest identification services, although charges may be reduced for those on benefits or a low income.

You could also contact a commercial organisation that provides a pest control service. They will always charge a fee.

## Risk to health

You can complain to the council about serious health or safety hazards in your home. Councils use the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to assess if your home has hazards that could put the health or safety of you or your family at risk. Pests and vermin can cause health problems

Contact your council's environmental Health team. They should visit to inspect your home quickly if it is likely that there is a serious risk of harm. Otherwise you might have to wait longer for an inspection.

Hazards in your home are rated according to how likely it is that someone will be badly affected by them. If the problem is serious the council can order your landlord to carry out to take steps to deal with the infestation.

## DIY and advice

Your landlord or the council may be responsible for taking steps to deal with pests and vermin. But if they can't or won't help, you might be able to deal with the infestation yourself. The **British Pest Control Association** website provides useful tips on how to deal with pests and vermin

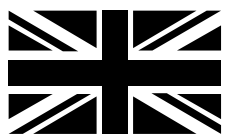
## Eviction warning

If you live in privately rented housing, your landlord might start eviction proceedings if you complain to the council. There is some protection against 'revenge evictions' if your tenancy started or was renewed on or after 1 October 2015. For more information see the factsheet *Section 21 notices: restrictions*.

## Further advice

You can get further advice from Shelter's free\* housing advice helpline (0808 800 4444), a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice office, or by visiting [shelter.org.uk/advice](http://shelter.org.uk/advice) or [adviceguide.org.uk](http://adviceguide.org.uk)

\*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



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## Note

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