

Swindon Borough Council  
**Pest Control Service**  
**Fact Sheet**

**Rats**



**Rats**

A rat can be found anywhere that offers shelter, food and water - including sewers. They are efficient burrowers and like compost heaps, areas under hedges and sheds where they dig shallow burrows and make nests with dry grass and leaves. In houses they nest in wall cavities and beneath floorboards.

The brown rat weighs between 350 and 500 grams and is typically between 200 and 270 mm long. Its fur colour can vary from almost black through to the most common grey/brown.

They are agile climbers and jumpers, often nesting in roof spaces and upper floors. Rats are mainly active at night but can be seen searching for food and water during the day.

The first sign of a rat infestation is often visibility of their droppings. Rats produce droppings approximately 20mm (3/4") long. Other signs of rats are damaged packets of food, cartons, bags etc. and grease/dirt smear marks on skirting boards, doors and chewed through pipes or wires.

## **Preventing Rat Infestations.**

Ensure that your property is in good repair making it difficult for rats to gain access. If you are carrying out any DIY work, which involves making holes in the cavity walls, e.g. new pipe work, please make sure that the holes are thoroughly resealed as this is often a route into houses for rats and mice.

- 1 Check your external wall for holes in brickwork, broken airbricks, broken windows, badly fitted doors etc where rats may be entering the property Remember a rat can squeeze through gaps of only 2cm.
- 2 Check your drainage is in good repair as rats can access the house via broken pipe work.

- 1 Do not attract rats
- 2 Firstly remove any source of food and water. Rats can be attracted to bird and pet food too, so it's advisable to use a rat proof bird table and clear away all spilled pet food.
- 1 Use your wheelie bin
- 2 Take care that all waste foods are disposed of into your wheeled bin and not left lying around in bags or sacks. Make sure that your dustbin lid can be closed.
- 1 Control rubbish

Avoid the accumulation of rubbish, piles of wood and garden waste. Clear any overgrown areas of your garden. These can all provide excellent nesting places!

## **Treating a Rat Infestation.**

- 1 Poison baits can be bought across the counter but always follow the manufacturers instructions.
  - 2 You can call a professional pest control operator, these can be found in the yellow pages.
- 1) **Swindon Borough Council offers a subsidised service for rats and mice in domestic premises**

## **What Swindon Borough Council Pest Control WILL do:**

- 1 Assess the problem that you have with rats or mice.
- 2 Lay poison bait in appropriate areas.
- 3 Leave advisory information detailing the poison used.
- 4 Revisit as necessary to check that the poison bait has been taken and that the rat/mouse problem is reducing.

Offer advice on structural work that may be necessary to help you solve the problem (e.g. drainage work).

**What Swindon Borough Council pest Control WILL NOT do:**

- 1 Carry out any structural work to keep rats or mice out of houses/buildings gardens (including lifting floorboards or heavy manhole covers).
- 2 Lay poison in inappropriate or unsafe areas. This is usually at the discretion of the operative but includes open spaces/alleys or other areas where children or pets may have unsupervised access to poison bait.
- 2 Routinely remove dead rats or mice. (To dispose of these, double-bag them and put them in to your wheeled bin.)

**Swindon Borough Council Pest Control Charges**

- 1 Free with Swindon Card (a Y or Z)
- 2 £28 if prepaying by credit/debit card
- 3 £30 paying by cash or cheque on the day.

This charge covers the initial call out and up to 2 subsequent visits if required.

**To arrange for a visit by Pest Control**

**Call (01793) 466071**