Housing Services Pest Policy

# Introduction

* 1. Medway Council Housing Services recognises that properties can become infested by pests. We also recognise that pests and infestations in the home can be stressful and upsetting as well as a potential risk to health and safety.
	2. This policy outlines Housing Services (the Council) approach to dealing with pests in the properties it owns which are occupied by tenants or leaseholders.

# Purpose

* 1. The specific objectives of the Pest Control policy are:
	2. To clearly set out where responsibility lies for different types of pests in and around the property.
	3. To ensure that our estates are kept free of pests.

# Scope

* 1. The Pest Control Policy applies to all HRA and leasehold properties we manage in line with your tenancy agreement or lease.

**Definitions**

* + 1. For the purposes of this policy a pest is defined as any organism, usually an animal, judged as a threat to humans or to the homes that humans occupy.

# Legislation and Guidance

* 1. Internal
		1. Tenancy management policy and procedure
		2. Medway Council Tenancy Agreement(s)
		3. Responsive Repairs Policy
		4. Mutual Exchange Policy
		5. Voids Policy
		6. Tenants Handbook
	2. External
		1. Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
		2. The Public Health Act 1936
		3. The Public Health Act 1961
		4. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
		5. The Housing Act 1985
		6. Environmental protection Act 1990
		7. Health and Safety at Work Act 1972
		8. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
		9. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
		10. The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
		11. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 2002
		12. Data Protection Act 2018

# Policy

## Responsibility

* 1. Medway Council Housing Services are responsible for:
		1. Communal areas and block treatments – Treatment for rats, mice, cockroaches, wasps, pigeons and squirrels within communal areas. On occasion, we may need to treat a whole block, including communal areas and all flats. Where a lessee’s property is part of a block being treated, we will recharge the lessee for a proportion of the cost.
		2. Tenanted flats – Treatment for rats, mice, cockroaches, wasps, pigeons, and squirrels within tenants’ flats if the infestation is a communal issue. We will block any holes after treatment has been done. When a property is empty, we will inspect it and deal with any pest issues before re-letting the property.
		3. Tenanted houses – We will provide treatment for pigeons or squirrels in lofts but not for mice or other pests within the property itself. We will block any holes after treatment has been done. We may also recharge you or claim legal costs if you do not deal with pest control issues in your home.
		4. Homes for Independent Living Schemes – We will provide treatment for bedbugs in the Homes for Independent Living Schemes.
	2. Tenants and Leaseholders are responsible for:
		1. Maintaining your property and garden so that they do not harbour pests that may be the primary cause of repeat infestations affecting your own property or neighbouring ones.
		2. Taking actions to help prevent and manage infestations.This includes regular cleaning, putting rubbish and left over food in bins and reporting any leaks immediately.
		3. Allowing Medway Council and our contractors access to carry out pest control treatments that we are responsible for.
		4. Treatment of any pests we are not responsible for
* Bees – Bees are not regarded as pests and cannot be killed. In exceptional circumstances, if they present a major risk, bees can be removed by a registered Bee Handler.
* Foxes – Foxes are not regarded as pests and cannot be trapped or killed. Fox nuisance issues can be eased by not feeding them or leaving food out and by maintaining your garden.
* Any other insects (including flies, ants, fleas, spiders, silver fish, bedbugs (in general need properties) and ladybirds) – These are generally controlled by keeping your home clean and well-maintained. If treatment is required this can be done by residents using domestic products, for example ant powder, and would not normally require treatment from a pest control contractor.

## Enforcement

* 1. Legal action will be taken if you refuse access to your property to deal with pest control issues in your home.
	2. We may recharge these costs from you and claim the cost of any legal action we may take. We may also make referrals to external agencies. We may also recharge you or claim costs.
	3. Contractors, Surveyors, Estate Officers, Tenancy Services Managers and Supported Housing Managers can make this decision after visiting the property where the infestation has been reported. Exemptions can be made e.g., for vulnerable tenants. Exemption from charges is at the discretion of the Head of Tenant Services, Head of HRA Property and Development, Property Services Operations Manager or the Tenancy Services Manager.

# Role, responsibilities, and authority

* 1. The Assistant Director of Culture and Community retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
	2. The Chief Housing Officer is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and the associated procedures. This includes responsibility for monitoring and review, staff awareness and training, policy development and communication to customers.

# Monitoring, review, and evaluation

* 1. The Council will regularly monitor performance regarding Pest Control and where benchmarking services exist, will benchmark our performance against similar organisations.
	2. This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

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