Derbyshire County Council Adult Social Care and Health

Pest Infestation Guidance for use in Residential Settings

Version 1

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If you would like to make any comments, amendments, additions etc. please email ASCH.AdultCare.Policy@derbyshire.gov.uk

Introduction

This practice guidance provides a consistent framework for preventing, identifying, assessing and managing pest activity and infestations within Derbyshire County Council (DCC) residential settings. It promotes prevention and early identification, clarifies responsibilities, provides a risk assessment framework, and supports proportionate safeguarding and regulatory consideration where residents may be at risk.

Pest activity means any sighting, sign or reasonable suspicion of pests. An infestation is established or recurring pest activity that creates a risk to health, wellbeing, safety, dignity or service delivery. Managers should consider how a resident's individual needs, communication abilities and level of dependence on others may affect their experience of, and ability to report, pest activity.

Key Principles

This guidance is underpinned by seven key principles: prevention, early intervention, safeguarding, professional curiosity, person-centred practice, accountability and partnership working.

Key Message

Pest activity should never be viewed solely as a facilities or property issue. In residential care settings, it may affect resident safety and wellbeing, food hygiene and infection prevention, dignity and quality of life, safeguarding and neglect, and regulatory compliance.

Managers must ensure that concerns are responded to promptly, risk assessed, escalated where necessary and reviewed until they are resolved.

Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that:

- Residents receiving care are protected from the risks associated with pest infestations and vermin.
- Colleagues recognise signs of infestation and respond appropriately.
- Infestations are identified, reported and managed promptly.
- Safeguarding concerns arising from infestations are addressed without delay.
- Risks to residents, visitors and colleagues are reduced.

This guidance applies to:

- All employees

- Agency workers
- Volunteers

Example Infestations

Examples include rodents (such as rats and mice); crawling insects (such as cockroaches, fleas, bed bugs, ants and silverfish); flying insects (such as flies, wasps and hornets); and other pests or vermin, including moths, birds and squirrels where their presence or nesting creates a health or safety risk.

These pest categories are widely recognised within pest control standards and guidance.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Prevention should be viewed as a core operational responsibility. Effective cleaning schedules, food hygiene arrangements, waste disposal systems and routine environmental inspections significantly reduce the likelihood of infestation.

Care Home Managers should ensure that kitchens, dining rooms, resident bedrooms, lounges, laundry rooms, storage areas and external waste storage locations are subject to regular cleaning and inspection. In order to achieve this, managers will ensure colleague awareness and compliance with the Cleaning procedure in residential homes and day services V4 making provision to monitor that all daily, weekly, monthly, and annual cleaning records/logs covered by the appendices referenced within this document are completed. The direct link to these appendices is V4 appendices.

In addition, compliance with Food Safety Management System - Assured Safe Catering Procedure is to be monitored including the satisfactory completion of all cleaning, training and audit records within this document. These include but are not limited to:

- Opening and closing checks
- Cleaning schedules (Daily Cleaning Rota, Weekly Cleaning Log, Monthly and Quarterly Cleaning Log)
- Monthly pest control awareness record
- Quarterly Kitchen Audits

Managers will also ensure compliance with the Infection prevention and control policy which includes the particularly pertinent section 26 Animals in a Care Home Setting. There is also a risk assessment in relation to animals, available in the ASCH Direct Care Residential Teams Channel which should be accessible to all Service managers and Deputies at Animals in Care Homes V1.

In Accordance with the Adult Social Care & Health Waste Management Practice Guidance:

Waste storage at residential and day services should be away from the building and stored in a secure area away from public access; where this may prove difficult the waste must be stored in lockable waste containers that are anchored and padlocked. Damaged locking mechanism or damaged containers should be reported to the waste collecting contractor by placing a 'damaged bin' label on the bin. Any skip left onsite overnight must be 10 meters away from the building.

Domestic colleagues should report unusual odours, pest sightings, droppings, contamination, structural concerns or repeated signs of infestation. Care colleagues should remain alert to complaints of bites, itching, sleep disturbance or distress that may indicate pest activity.

Property defects such as damaged air vents, gaps around pipes, defective doors or structural damage should be addressed promptly as they may provide entry routes for pests.

Food kept in residents' bedrooms must be stored in suitable airtight containers. This control applies to all pest risks, including rodents and insects, and is particularly important where pest activity has previously occurred.

Recognising Infestations

The signs of pest activity vary depending on the type of pest involved. The table below outlines some common indicators that colleagues may observe within residential care settings. It is not an exhaustive list and should be used alongside professional judgement and local reporting procedures.

Pest Type	Common Signs
Rats and mice	Droppings, scratching sounds in walls or ceilings, gnaw marks, nests, damaged food packaging, grease marks along walls or skirting boards.
Bed bugs	Bites, blood spots on bedding, dark spotting on mattresses or furniture, shed skins, live insects.
Fleas	Repeated bites, itching, excessive scratching, visible fleas on soft furnishings or clothing.
Cockroaches	Droppings, egg cases, unusual odours, sightings in kitchens or food preparation areas, contamination of food or surfaces.
Ants	Trails of ants, nests, recurring activity around food, waste or moisture sources.

Flies and other flying insects	Increased numbers of insects, activity around food, waste or drains, contamination risks.
Birds	Nesting activity, feathers, droppings, blocked gutters or ventilation points.
Other pests	Any evidence of nesting, droppings, damage, contamination or repeated sightings should be reported and investigated

Colleagues do not need to confirm an infestation before reporting concerns. Any sighting, sign or reasonable suspicion of pest activity must be reported, recorded and investigated promptly. All reports from residents must be taken seriously, recorded and checked.

Risk Assessment

Pest activity can present different levels of risk depending on the type of pest, the areas affected, the circumstances in which it is identified, and the impact on residents, colleagues and service delivery. Risk is not determined solely by the extent of pest activity. In some circumstances, a single sighting may represent a high or critical risk, for example where pests are identified in food preparation areas, where there is evidence of contamination, or where residents are unable to recognise, avoid or report risks independently.

The assessment should consider:

- the type, location and frequency of pest activity;
- evidence of droppings, nesting, infestation or contamination;
- residents' individual needs, communication abilities and level of dependence on others for care and support;
- the impact on colleagues, visitors and others accessing the service;
- any bites, injury, distress or impact on daily life;
- risks to food preparation, dining or sleeping areas;
- infection prevention and control risks, including any requirement for specialist advice;
- structural defects or potential entry points;
- recurring pest activity following previous treatment; and
- any disruption to the service or its ability to operate safely.

The manager must ensure that a robust and proportionate risk assessment is completed and recorded (Generic Risk Assessment Form). Specialist advice should be sought where required, including Infection Prevention and Control, Environmental Health, Property Services, Health and Safety, or pest control professionals, depending on the nature and severity of the risk.

The risk assessment and required response should be reviewed as further information becomes available, following escalation or intervention, and whenever there is a change in circumstances, evidence of continuing pest activity, or an increase in risk.

Safeguarding Considerations

Pest activity may be an indicator of wider safeguarding concerns and should prompt consideration of whether an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. Particular consideration should be given were untreated infestations, poor environmental conditions, delays in responding to concerns, or a failure to take appropriate action place residents at risk of harm.

Safeguarding should be considered where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult with care and support needs is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves because of those needs. Relevant factors may include avoidable harm, persistent failure to act, unsafe living conditions, repeated disregard of residents' reports, physical harm arising from pest activity, wider concerns about the quality and safety of care or indicators of self-neglect. For more information, the Self-neglect toolkit outlines how to work together to support adults who are at risk of harm due to self-neglect.

The manager must record the rationale for making, or not making, a safeguarding referral and follow local safeguarding adults procedures where the criteria are met. The Adult safeguarding decision-making guidance should be accessed to support decision making.

Professional curiosity should be exercised where environmental conditions, the extent of pest activity, or explanations provided appear inconsistent with the available evidence. Managers should ensure that decisions, actions and their rationale are clearly documented.

Legal and Practice Context

When responding to pest activity, managers should have regard to the Care Act 2014 wellbeing principle, including personal dignity, protection from abuse and neglect, physical and mental health, and suitability of living accommodation. Pest activity may also indicate wider safeguarding, quality of care or environmental concerns requiring further consideration.

Multi-Agency Working

Complex infestations may require involvement from Environmental Health, safeguarding professionals, healthcare partners, pest control contractors and internal and external property maintenance services.

Where environmental conditions create wider risks, managers should consider whether additional external support is required. Information sharing should be lawful, proportionate and focused on reducing risk.

Roles and Responsibilities

Care Home Managers are accountable for ensuring pest activity is appropriately risk assessed, managed, monitored and escalated (Appendix 1 - Pest and Infestation Reporting Log). They must ensure that all pest activity is recorded, investigated and responded to promptly, with approved pest control services contacted where appropriate. The relevant service manager and the Quality and Compliance team should be notified where rodent activity is confirmed indoors, pest activity is recurring, residents or food preparation areas are affected, part of the service is closed, or the matter presents a significant safeguarding, health, safety or operational risk. Any decision to restrict access to an area must be risk assessed, recorded and reviewed. All sightings, actions taken, contractor reports and follow-up checks must be retained in a central site record to support oversight, monitoring and identification of recurring issues.

Deputy Managers support investigations, action plans, recording and monitoring arrangements.

Care Workers and Night Care Workers are responsible for identifying, recording and reporting concerns. Night colleagues should not delay escalation of significant concerns until normal office hours.

Senior Care Workers should help ensure that all matters such as sightings and actions taken are centrally logged.

Domestic Workers are responsible for reporting evidence of infestation and maintaining environmental standards.

Facilities Management should report and address structural issues that may contribute to infestation risks.

Estates Team – Advise as required

Immediate Response to Reported Pest Activity

When pest activity is seen or suspected, colleagues must protect residents from immediate risk, prevent access to contaminated food or affected areas where necessary, notify the person in charge, record the precise location and nature of the concern, and contact the approved pest control service and Property or Facilities service as appropriate.

Colleagues must not attempt to catch, strike, poison, handle or dispose of live or injured pests unless this is part of an authorised role supported by appropriate training, equipment and risk assessment.

The manager must consider residents' individual needs, arrange alternative accommodation or support where required, and ensure treatment, deep cleaning, structural proofing and follow-up inspections are completed and recorded.

Escalation Process

All concerns should be recorded and reported promptly. Managers should determine whether immediate action, pest control intervention, safeguarding consideration or multi-agency involvement is required.

The registered manager must also consider whether the incident meets a statutory notification threshold, including where an event prevents or materially affects the safe and proper running of the service. The rationale for notifying, or not notifying, the Care Quality Commission must be recorded, and the current notification route and form used.

Incidents and associated actions must remain under review until treatment, cleaning and proofing work has been completed, follow-up checks have taken place, and risks have reduced to an acceptable level.

Managers must seek advice from the relevant District or Borough Council Environmental Health Team where pest activity may present a significant public health or food safety risk.

Immediate Escalation Triggers

Immediate escalation is required where:

- Rats or mice are identified in resident bedrooms or sleeping areas.
- Residents have suffered bites, injury, distress or other harm associated with pest activity.
- Pest activity affects residents who may be unable to recognise, avoid or report risks independently.
- Food contamination presents a risk to health or safety.
- Pest activity affects food preparation, dining or medication storage areas.
- An infestation is severe, widespread or recurring.
- Part of the service requires closure or restricted access.
- There is a significant safeguarding, health, safety or operational risk.

Recording and Learning

Records must be factual, objective and timely. Significant or recurring incidents should be reviewed to identify lessons learned and opportunities for service improvement. Recurring pest activity must be escalated promptly to the group manager, with assurance that contractor recommendations, structural repairs and preventive actions have been completed. Colleagues who reasonably believe that concerns are not being taken seriously or appropriately addressed may raise them through the Council's whistleblowing arrangements.

Change History

Version	Date	Name	Reason
Version 1	October 2026	Quality & Compliance team	New guidance