



Dealing with Pests

Maintaining a clean and tidy living environment is crucial for preventing infestations and ensuring the well-being of all residents. We need to work together to maintain a clean and pest-free environment and living space and we thank you for your cooperation with this. We have put together this guide to inform you of your responsibilities, and ours, in keeping your home pest-free.

Leaseholder/Shared owner

This leaflet is providing guidance on how we deal with pests. However, our approach can vary depending on what your type of tenure and subsequently what your responsibilities are. For example, Leaseholders and Shared Owners have greater level of responsibility for the property and for repairs and maintenance of the property in comparison with the rented customers.

What is a pest, and how do they get into your home?

There's no legal definition of pests and vermin but they're generally thought to include any living creature that has an undesirable effect on our well-being, our food or our living conditions.

This includes those that carry disease and parasites; damage food, clothing or buildings; and wild animals that could potentially bite.

Pests can gain entry to your home through various means, including:



Gaps and cracks: Small openings in walls, doors, windows, and foundations can provide easy access for pests such as insects and rodents.

Doors and windows: Pests can enter through open doors and windows, especially if screens are damaged or missing.

Utility lines and pipes: Gaps around utility lines, plumbing pipes, and electrical conduits can serve as entry points for pests.

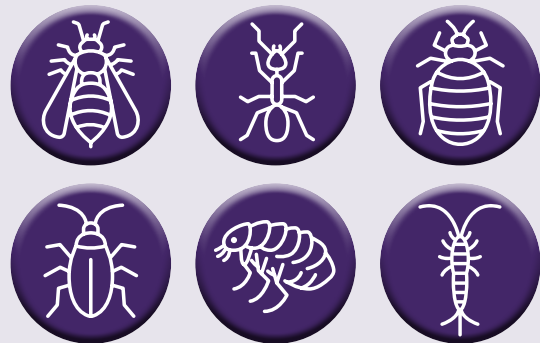
Vents and chimneys: Uncapped vents and chimneys can allow pests to enter the building.

Exterior vegetation: Overgrown vegetation near the building can provide hiding places and pathways for pests to enter.

To prevent pests from gaining entry, it's important to report any defects and maintain a clean environment.

At Platform we categorise pests as:

Insect infestation – these are very difficult to stop as they can get through the smallest of gaps. Examples include: Wasps, ants, bedbugs, cockroaches, fleas, silverfish.



We will deal with reports of insect infestation if they are:

- part of communal infestation.
- if individual properties are infested as a result of communal outbreak
- or if the infestation is found to be an inherited issue.

Important to note

Platform do not deal with Ants & Spiders infestation. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate treatment.

Vermin/rodent.

Examples include: Rats, mice and squirrels.



Important to note

Rats in habitable spaces present Health and Safety hazard for occupants so Platform will deal with reports of rats' infestation in our rented properties. If the cause of the infestation is found to be not related to the building defect then the cost of the treatment will be recharged to you.

Pests in your home - responsibilities

In most cases, it's your responsibility to deal with a pest problem in your home or garden. It is also up to you to let us know of any situation that might cause pests to enter your home.

If there are visible signs of infestation occurring **before you move in**, we are likely to be responsible for dealing with this. We are also responsible for dealing with pests in any communal areas owned by Platform, such as shared hallways and gardens.



We are responsible for keeping the structure of the property in good repair. If it is obvious the pest problem has been caused due to a defect, for example a hole in the wall which may encourage mice, you must report this to us.

However, our repair duties are only triggered once you make us aware, it is your responsibility under your Tenancy Agreement that you must notify Platform of any defects in your home. If you have not reported any defects to Platform, arranging the removal of pests is your responsibility.

In cases where you have arranged for your own pest controller due to no visible signs of entry but they subsequently find a defect(s) which has allowed pests to enter then please obtain their report as evidence. We are responsible for rectifying the defect but we can also consider reimbursement of the pest controller costs.

Insect infestations

In the case of insect infestations it is important to note we will deal with clear and obvious defects but these creatures can get through the minutest of gaps and it is impossible to completely seal a building.

Neighbouring properties

It is important to note that the location of some of our properties is more prone to pest issues than others, for example, if they are close to a water course, food outlets etc, we will work with you to try and overcome and prevent pests from gaining access where possible.



Neighbouring properties owned by Platform...

Where infestations have been caused by poor conditions of a neighbouring property to you and this property is owned by Platform, we are committed to work with you to resolve the issue. Please ensure you report this to us as soon as possible, our External Contracts team will investigate the source of the infestation. This work must be done in conjunction with one of our Housing Operations teams. They will apply necessary housing management policies when dealing with the customers who are encouraging or the cause of the infestation.

Neighbouring properties which are privately owned...

If the neighbouring property is privately owned then please report this to us in usual way. Our External Contracts team will investigate the source of the infestation and then one of our Housing Operations teams will use a collaborative approach to resolve the issue with the private owner by communicating the findings about the origin of infestation. If necessary we may need to liaise with the Environment Health team at your local authority.

If a private owner reports a pest issue that affects their property and they believe that the issue originated from a Platform property, we would encourage the private owner to speak with our customer who can report the issue to us. In line with our Policy we will investigate the original cause of infestation and if it is found to be Platform's responsibility we will consider treatment to the private property where it is evidenced that they are affected.

However, the private owners are responsible for any remedial works and blocking access points to their property.



Please note, whilst we are committed to help try and resolve the issue it is advisable that some of these situations can take time to engage, agree and implement actions and we will endeavour to keep you updated where possible.

Vulnerabilities

If you have a vulnerability which would prevent you from seeing the defect, such as a visual impairment or a mental health condition such as Hoarding then Platform will **work with you** to remove the pests and complete the repair to prevent entry.

Reimbursement for pest control

We will **consider** reimbursement for the removal of pests if:

- If you have vulnerability – as noted above if you have arranged for your own pest control but have a vulnerability which would have prevented you from being able to see a defect allowing pest entry to your home then we will consider reimbursement for the pest control cost.
- Your pest controller finds a defect(s) which were ‘hidden’ and classed as unreasonable to expect for customers to have seen.
- There is evidence that the pests are being caused by poor conditions of a neighbouring Platform property.

What does Platform deem ‘reasonable’ for customers to have seen?

Platform deems it reasonable for customers to see a hole in the wall, a missing fascia or roof tile that could be seen from the ground without specialist equipment.

Examples where it would be difficult for you to notice include a broken drain underground, or hole in the roof space.

If we identify that this repair would have not been reasonable for you to have identified, and report to us initially then we can consider reimbursement for the pest controller you’ve arranged.

Don’t ignore pests – help us to help you!

It is your responsibility to keep your home clean and tidy and failure to do so is a tenancy breach for which action can be taken.

It is important for you to take steps to reduce the risk of pest being attracted into your home; this is often down to removing any possible food sources, these include pet food/bird food. Inside your home make sure your food is not easily accessible and any food waste is not left around and ensure your home is kept clean and tidy. Externally, ensure food waste is placed in bins which are not easily accessible to pests.

If you know you have a pest problem and do nothing about it, you may be causing a health risk to both your own home and your neighbours’ homes.

Where can I get more information?

<https://www.gov.uk/pest-control>

Contact your council to find out if they provide pest control services, they may also provide useful information on how to prevent and treat pests.

<https://bpca.org.uk/>

The British Pest Control Association they cover the whole of the UK and can advise and deal with any pest problems you might have.

Bees and bats are considered endangered and should not be disturbed. For information on bees please visit www.bbka.org.uk or call **08713620138** and they may be able to arrange a bee keeper to safely remove the nest. For information on bats please visit www.bats.org.uk.



Nesting birds

There could be limitations to what we can do during the birds’ nesting season. Treatments may have to wait and take place once the nesting period ended.

For more information, please visit the website: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/helping-birds-and-wildlife/birds-in-the-roof>.





Contact us

The easiest way to contact us about a non-urgent repair or pest control matter is via our website:

<https://www.platformhg.com/report-repair>

Alternatively, you can contact us by phone on **0333 200 7304** - please note our call waiting times vary depending on when you call us.

If you need this information in easy read format, Braille or you need an interpreter please contact diversity@platformhg.com.