

Treatment

West Somerset Council provides a charged service for treatment of pests in domestic premises.

Rats and mice treatments could be subject to discount for those people on certain benefits, such as :

- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Income Support

Prices*

	Price (£)
Rats (per treatment of up to four visits)	£39.00
Mice (per treatment of up to three visits)	£45.00

*prices correct at time of printing

West Somerset Council also have a service for

- Squirrels in houses
- Wasps nests
- Cockroaches
- Flies
- Fleas
- Bedbugs

Should you wish to use this service please contact Customer Services to request an appointment.

HOW TO CONTACT THE COUNCIL

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES

Telephone

01643 703704

Telephone hours

8.30am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday
(Your call may be recorded)

Emergency

Careline 0800 0831404 (5.00pm-8.30am)

Email

customerservices@westsomerset.gov.uk

Website

www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk

Minehead Customer Centre

1-3 Summerland Road, Minehead, Somerset
TA24 5BP

Monday - Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Williton Office

West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton,
Taunton, Somerset TA4 4QA

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm

Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm



Information & Advice

Rats



This document can be made available in large print, Braille, tape format or in other languages upon request



Introduction

Britain is home to two kinds of rat:

- The ship rat, also known as the black rat is very rare in the UK.
- The common rat, also known as the brown rat or sewer rat, is the most abundant and wide-spread species found throughout the UK. To thrive it only needs shelter, food and water.

An adult weights from 100 to 500 grams and is about 240 mm long (excluding the tail). They have brown fur on their back and grey fur on the belly. Their tail is shorter than the head and body.

The house mouse, in comparison, is much smaller weighing only 30 grams and measuring about 100mm in length (excluding the tail). They have large ears in relation to their body with small feet and a tail which is longer than their body.

Lifestyle

Rats need shelter, food and water to survive. They are efficient burrowers and favour compost heaps and they group underneath hedges and sheds, where they will dig shallow burrows and form nests with dry grass and leaves. In houses they will nest in wall cavities and beneath floor boards.

Rats are good swimmers and are very at home in sewers where they have food, water and shelter. Rats can even climb vertical brick walls.

Their front teeth grow continuously and to keep their teeth to a useful length the rat needs to gnaw frequently on hard objects. Such objects can include lead water pipes, brickwork, electric cables and wood.

Rats are usually active at night but sometimes

venture out during the day. They usually have well worn 'runs' between their living area and source of food and water.

The life expectancy of a rat is around one year, during which time a female will typically breed five times with an average litter of 8. Female rats have their first litter at the age of 4 months.

Significance

Rats can be a major hazard to health. They spread many forms of disease, especially through their droppings and urine. Some of these diseases can be fatal, such as Leptospirosis, although the incidence of such diseases is rare.

They may eat food intended for human consumption and often damage much more food which should be discarded. Through gnawing they can cause considerable structural damage to properties.

Signs of Infestation

- Damage caused by gnawing
- Holes
- Smears and droppings

Packaging will often show tooth marks, the size of which will indicate whether it is a rat or a mouse. Holes made by rats in doors and walls, and the entrances to nests, are about 80 mm in diameter, and nests may be made in wall and floor cavities.

Having established the best route from one place to another, rats tend to use this route frequently. Their 'run' becomes soiled with the grease and other dirt on the rats fur and will be very apparent in even moderate infestations. Foot prints are sometimes visible on soft or dusty surfaces. The amount of droppings present is a good indication of the size of the infestation and how long they have been there.

Control

Removal of food, water and harbourage will deny rats their three main survival requirements.

An infestation should be controlled using poison bait. We do recommend a controlled baiting programme implemented by a qualified pest contractor to ensure that no harm comes to other animals or humans. They are the experts!

Bait can be bought from chemists, hardware shops and garden centres if you wish to tackle the infestation yourself. The safety precautions and instructions given on the packaging must be strictly adhered to. It is essential that all other food sources are removed in order to force the rats into eating the poison bait.

It will take several days for the rats to feed freely from the bait. When there are no more 'takes' from the bait, it can be assumed that the infection has been eradicated. All remaining baits should be removed and any repairs caused by the rats should be repaired. Proofing of the premises from further rat access is essential.

Rats that have taken poison bait will go back to their nest where they will die. It is possible that this may cause a smell. How long the smell lasts will depend upon how warm the nest is but will subside after a short while. It is not recommended that any attempt is made to find the nest as this is usually very difficult.

As an alternative to poison bait, traps can be used, however they have the disadvantage that any rats caught in the trap have to be disposed of and the trap re-set. Traps can also be prone to accidentally 'going off' causing harm to people and other animals.