

## Rats and Mice

### Brown Rat



**Brown Rats** (*Rattus norvegicus*) are a group living rodent with a strong social system. Although they are not as well adapted for climbing as mice, they can scale rough walls and pipes. Although normally found in outdoor areas rats can also reside inside buildings if an entry point has been found. Rats are particularly concerning when inside properties as their need to “gnaw” to keep their ever-growing incisors worn down meaning that they target water pipes, electrical cables and wooden truss and beams within attics. Rats have also been known to carry disease so it’s extremely important for infestations within properties to be managed effectively.

- Rats will make use of damaged air bricks and uncapped pipes to gain access to properties.
- Good building maintenance and sealing all damaged external entry points will help deter rats from gaining access to buildings.
- Rat droppings are a sign of activity and are often found in small piles and rats tend to use particular areas as “latrines” The below picture shows a typical dropping. These are usually 12-18mm in length and often pointed to one end are range from shiny black to dark brown.



People must also be aware of using bird feeders in gardens, especially around wintertime when rats will not find as much natural food to forage. Bird feeders should be removed if you become aware of rat activity. Commercial food businesses should be particularly careful to ensure that large waste bins are emptied regularly, and that rubbish is not accumulating at ground level which can attract rodents. Areas of dense vegetation that cover the ground provide good harbourage points for rats and should be cut back and well maintained to prevent this.

## House Mouse



**House Mice** (*Mus domesticus*) can be found in a wide range of urban and rural habitats and buildings. They do not survive well outdoors and require warm and dry environments to exist. Mice have an extraordinary sense of touch and as they are most active at night, when it is dark, they use their use of touch and smell, rather than eyesight, to navigate their surroundings. They are extremely good climbers as this has allowed them to access all levels of housing. Due to their small size adult mice can squeeze through gaps as little as 6mm.

- Treating mice is generally a multi-step approach where a Pest Control Contractor will decide to either use rodenticide or traps to target the mice along with recommending areas around your house that will require proofing to seal off access areas for mice.
- Common access points are the pipe entry and exit points under sinks, boiler units and radiators.
- Sealing as many entry points as possible will greatly reduce the instances of mice gaining entry to your property. As mice tend to produce droppings as they move, this is good way of identifying them. They are much smaller than rat droppings around 3-6mm in size.



The picture below shows a comparison of size between mouse droppings and rat droppings.



The Council has a responsibility under the **Prevention of Damages by Pests Act 1949** to ensure that infestations of rats and mice are eradicated however:

- This **does not mean** that we will carry out the work ourselves or instruct the work to be carried out.
- It is the responsibility of either the owner of the land or property to ensure that the necessary treatment is carried out to eradicate any infestation.
- If there is evidence of a rodent infestation coming from an adjacent property, we can arrange for a survey to be carried out by a Pest Control Contractor. They will then report their findings and we can ensure the responsible person take the necessary steps to eradicate the infestation. You can report this by emailing our Environmental Health team on [eh@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:eh@pkc.gov.uk) or calling the Customer Service Centre on 01738 476476.
- If the adjacent property is Council Housing or Housing Association tenancy then reports of rodent infestation can be reported to your Housing Association or in the case of Council Housing report by using [MyPKC](#), email [HousingRepairs@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:HousingRepairs@pkc.gov.uk) or by calling Housing Repairs on 01738 476000.