

Rats

What do they look like?

Most rats have brownish fur on their back and grey underneath. However colour can vary from white to black. Adult rats are approximately 200 - 270mm long and their tails can be between 150 - 200mm.

The smallest of the common rats is the ship rat. This is rarely seen in Britain today. They are usually black in colour, have hairless ears and a tail longer than their bodies.

Where do they live?

Rats will live in areas where food, water and shelter are accessible, e.g. cellars, loft spaces, wall cavities or under floor boards. Also, rats can burrow under grassy banks, in compost heaps or under sheds. They are most commonly found in sewer systems.

Ship rats are found indoors or living in loft or roof spaces, rather than in sewer systems.

Infestation signs to watch out for:

Sightings of rats.

Trails left through grass and low vegetation (rats use the same routes).

Visible signs of footprints or tail swipes on surfaces, such as mud or dust.

Nests found indoors, under floor boards or in lofts.

Burrow holes. These tend to be between 7 - 120mm in diameter and found under tree roots, drain cover surrounds, at the edge of paving and in grassy banks.

Marks left on surfaces, such as dark grey smears from rat fur.

Signs of gnawing - even on non food materials. Rats generally do this to wear down their front teeth.

Sightings of common rat droppings. These are generally 12mm in length and taper at both ends.

What do they eat?

Cereal products are the most favoured food, however rats can eat most foods that humans eat.

Rats will gnaw and rip open packets and contaminate food with their urine and droppings.

Why must rats be controlled?

Diseases can be transmitted from rats to humans, such as Salmonellosis (food poisoning) and also Weils disease. Rats eat any foods intended for human beings and therefore can contaminate any foods they come into contact with. It has been estimated that approximately 5% of food produced throughout the world is lost as a result of rodents. Also, rat gnawing and burrowing can damage buildings and other structures.

How to get rid of rats?

Rats adapt easily to their environment, are extremely mobile and can breed very rapidly. These factors make controlling and treating rats very difficult for an untrained individual.

Residents can prevent infestations by:

Not leaving household waste where rats can access it.

Keeping your house/residence in good repair to stop rats gaining access.

Check all drain inspection covers are in place and in good repair.

Ensuring all yards and gardens are kept clean and tidy.

Do not excessively feed wild birds or any other animals as the food will attract rats.

Pesticide treatments - always follow the instructions stated on the label.



Knowsley Pest Control Service:

We provide a free service for the treatment of rats in domestic properties.

Fully trained Pest Control Officers will survey the infestation, then place poison bait in the most appropriate locations.

Follow-up visits will be made in order to ensure the success of the treatment.

