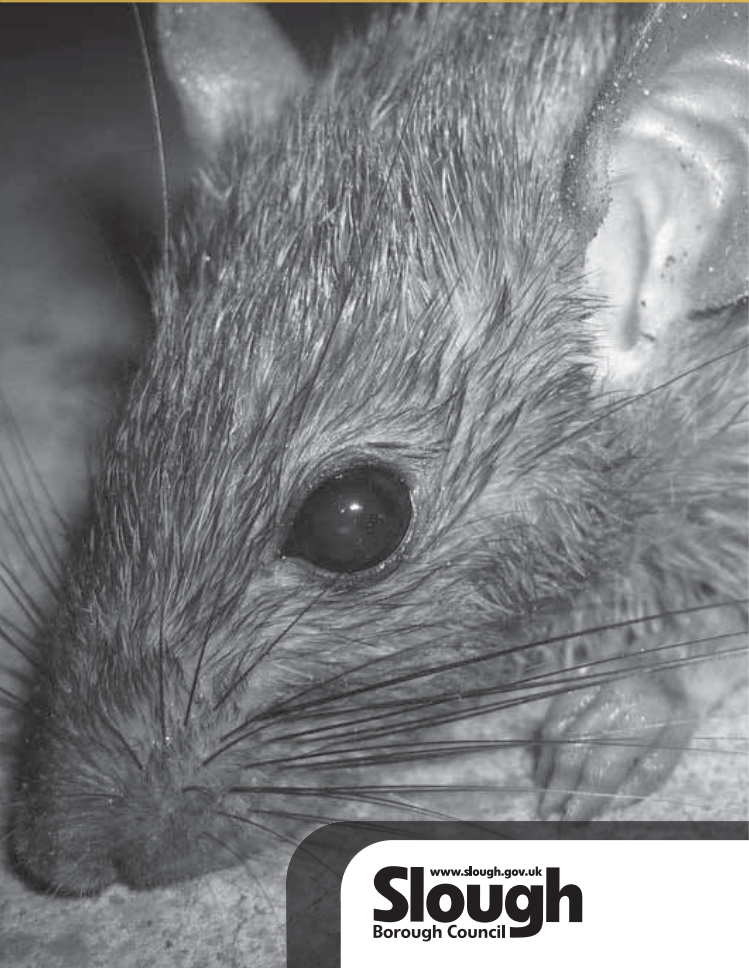


Cleaner Safer Greener

Do you have a rat problem?

Information for residents



Rat infestations

The most common rat in the UK is the brown or sewer rat which can be found anywhere where there is food, water and shelter. In homes they will live in loft spaces, wall cavities, cellars or under floorboards. In gardens, they will burrow into compost heaps or live under sheds. They are also commonly found living in sewer systems.

Rats live in nests or burrows, which are tunnels 7 - 12cm in diameter. It is quite easy for infestations to build up without ever noticing a rat. If a rat is seen during the day, it is usually an indicator of a sizeable rat problem.

Their favourite foods are cereal products, although they will eat almost anything available to them. They will foul food and work surfaces with their urine and droppings. Outside they will eat waste food left in or outside bins, and any naturally occurring fruit and vegetation.

What harm do they do?

Rats can be hazardous to health. They are responsible for the spread of many diseases including Weil's disease and salmonella and they will also contaminate food with urine, droppings and fur.

Rats can cause considerable damage by gnawing at woodwork, water pipes, electric cables and household items.



How to recognise a rat problem?

You may have a rat problem if you see any of the following:

- A rat that is dead or alive or its droppings
- Entrance holes 7-12cm in diameter in grassy banks, under tree roots, at the end of paving or drain cover surrounds
- Gnaw marks or you hear gnawing itself. Rats need to gnaw even when not eating to keep their teeth sharp and worn
- Trails through the grass or vegetation and foot and tail prints through dust or mud. Rats leave runs, as they tend to follow the same route when travelling
- Smears - dark grey marks left on surfaces by repeated contact with rat fur
- Damage to food and other objects. Rats will often exercise their teeth by gnawing on timber, wiring, pipe work etc. Soft metals such as lead and aluminium are no barrier to an active rat.

Keeping rats out

Do the following and reduce the chances of your home becoming infested with rats:

- Maintain a tidy garden, keeping possible shelter to rats to a minimum. Try to keep compost heaps in good order, sheds secure and cut back overgrown areas
- Maintain your taps and pipes to reduce water in your garden, also checking any sewer covers are fitted tightly and in place
- Do not leave rubbish where rodents can get at it. A locked shed or sealed bins are recommended
- Make sure that any food intended for garden birds are on a bird table or feeder, do not place food scraps directly on the ground
- Ensure that all defective drainage to your home is promptly repaired, such as broken drainpipes, and drainage chamber covers
- Ensure your bin is emptied regularly, and refuse is not allowed to accumulate in the garden

- Seal structural defects in the house to prevent rats gaining access to your home
- Having a good housekeeping system for any outdoor pets, for example rabbits in hutches or pigeons in lofts. Poor housekeeping can easily result in a rat infestation.

If you think you have a rat problem?

If you suspect a rat problem or notice for example fresh rat droppings, gnaw or smear marks, take immediate action to control the infestation.

For advice or treatment contact Slough Borough Council on (01753) 875255.

Please note there will be a charge for treatment carried out by the council.

