

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Issued by: Claire Lockwood (01635) 519507

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SIMPLE STEPS THAT CAN HELP CONTROL RATS

Following an influx of complaints about rats from Wokingham Borough residents, the Public Protection Partnership, which delivers Environmental Health services across Bracknell, West Berkshire and Wokingham, has carried out a survey to find out more about the problem and to advise residents on the best way to deal with them.

The survey involved knocking on doors in the areas where the Environmental Health service had received complaints over the last 12 months regarding rats. Of the 250 surveys that were carried out 99 households said that in the last 12 months they had had problems with rats. Of these households, 22 households had not removed food sources such as bird feeders from their properties and 38 households advised that they had no methods of control in place even though they had a problem with rats.

Cllr Norman Jorgensen, Chairman of the Public Protection Partnership, said: "It is clear that not enough households are taking appropriate action when they have rats in their garden or within their property. The survey also highlights that a large proportion of households who have tried to treat the problem failed as they did not use the services of a professional pest controller who can use a stronger single feed bait.

"The Public Protection Partnership recommendation is not to use poisons that can be bought over-the-counter, such as Bromadiolone or Difenacoum, but to the use of stronger poisons such as Brodifacoum, Flocoumafen or Difethialone which are much more effective in eradicating rats but these can only be applied by appropriately qualified professionals. The University of Reading has recently carried out a study into rat resistance to poisons¹ and they advise that continued use of Bromadiolone and Difenacoum will increase resistance in the rat population and in the long run will make the problem worse."

-MORE-

¹ Anticoagulant Resistance in Rats and Mice in the UK, 2017

He went on to say: "If you have a problem with rats, you need to deal with it as soon as you can as rats carry diseases that can affect humans and can cause expensive structural and electrical damage to properties."

The Public Protection Partnership's guidance is:

- *Look out for rats, their holes, droppings and runs. If you discover rat activity on or around your property you should use an accredited and authorised pest controller.*
- *Reduce areas of waste, woodpiles and overgrown areas as these provide harbourage for rats.*
- *Keep compost bins as pest proof as possible. Rats can easily access compost bins for food. Stand compost bins on chicken wire or mesh.*
- *Remove bird feeders or other food sources.*
- *Ensure that any animals such as chickens, rabbits and other pets, are kept in pest proof pens with no access for rats.*
- *Pest proof your property- ensure that all climbing plants are at least one metre away from the eaves of the house, cap off any exposed pipes, fill in any holes in the brickwork."*

You can report an infestation of rats or mice on the Environmental Health service's new [map](#). Please note the Public Protection Partnership provides advice on infestation but does not undertake eradication.

The Public Protection Partnership is a shared service provided by Bracknell Forest Borough District Council, West Berkshire District Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

- 1. The Joint Public Protection Committee oversees the work of the Public Protection Partnership (Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing) for Bracknell Forest Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council.**
- 2. More from Cllr Jorgensen on (0118) 986 8732**