

Rats



Discovering rats in your home can be distressing. Here are some signs to look out for, and simple steps that you can take to tackle the issue.

What to look out for

One of the most common signs of rats is their droppings. These are dark pellets which look like large grains of rice. There will usually be a number of droppings in one area.

Another sign can be bite marks on electrical cables, woodwork and plastic. You may also see that they have nibbled through food packaging in cupboards.

You may see footprints, tail swipes or dark grey smears from rat fur left on surfaces. Burrow holes may be found under tree roots, drain covers, grassy banks and the edges of paving. Rats can squeeze through gaps as small as a pencil width.

What you can do

- Clear up food and drink spillages immediately
- Move household rubbish out to the wheelie bin regularly, making sure the lid is closed properly
- Put the bins out for collection regularly
- Clear up pet faeces from the garden areas, as this is a source of food for rats
- Make sure pet food is not left outdoors, and remove hanging wire bird feeders to make sure that no bird food can fall to the ground
- Cut back overgrown areas in your garden, and clear any piles of wood or rubbish; as rats can make a home in untidy gardens.



What we can do to help

If you've called us about rats in your home, we'll visit to take a look to see if there are any gaps around pipes or in your external walls. If there are any, we'll seal them up.

We'll inspect the drain covers around your home and make sure they're in a good state of repair, and any disused pipes are sealed off. This will reduce the number of nesting places for rats.

Where we can, we will work with Knowsley Council to ask the Environmental Health teams to remove nesting places in public areas, especially if there are shops, bars or restaurants near your home.

How to choose the right pest control

There are many types of pest control, and the type you need depends on your circumstances, such as if you have children or pets. Knowsley Council Pest Control Service have different options to deal with rats in your home (there is a charge for this service). Alternatively, you can buy rodent poison and traps yourself. It's important that you follow the instructions carefully to keep you and your family safe.

For further information on types of rodent poison and your available options, visit [Knowsley Council's website](#).

Myths and facts

Myth - Rats the size of cats live in Knowsley

Fact - Most rats in the area weigh no more than 500 grams and are around 23cms long on average. When a rat is scared, it will fluff up its fur and look bigger, to scare away its enemies.

Myth - The rats are all coming from the sewer system

Fact - Only small pockets live in sewers and underground. Most rats live in burrows just under ground level. United Utilities work closely with KMBC and have an active baiting programme to control the number of rats in our sewers

Myth - Rats have become “immune” to poison

Fact - Today’s poisons work fine – but only if rats eat them. When rubbish, dog faeces or other food sources are easily accessible, rats won’t take the bait.

Myth - Cats, dogs and other animals help control rats

Fact - They may kill an occasional rat, but they can’t keep up with rats’ rapid breeding rates. Only people can make a difference! If you do have a pet it is important that you regularly clean up any faeces left in the garden so that rats can not use it as a food source.

Myth - The only way a rat can harm you is if they bite you

Fact - Rats can carry many diseases. These can spread to humans through rats’ urine or can rub off the rats body as they move around. It is particularly important to take extra care to thoroughly clean food preparation areas if you think there are rats in your home and to regularly wash your hands.

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