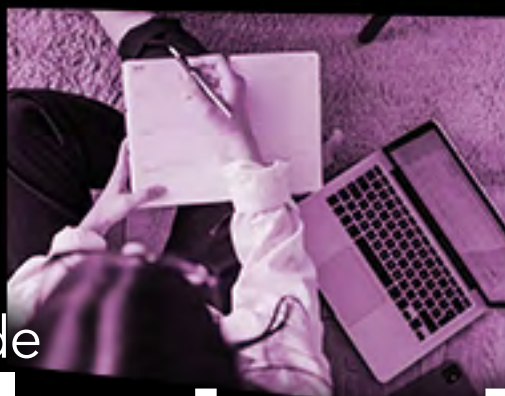
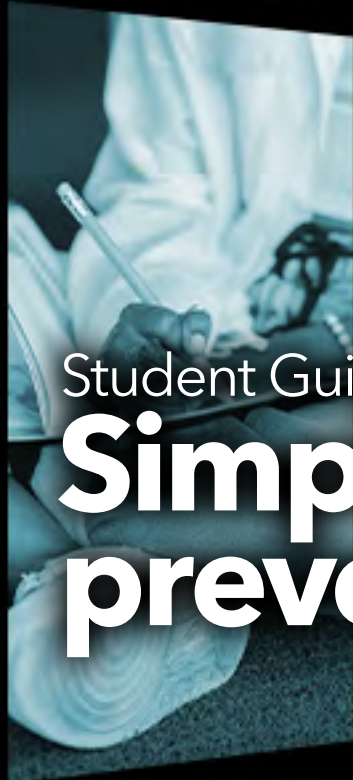


The BPCA logo is a green circle with the letters 'BPCA' in white. Below the circle, the text 'British Pest Control Association' is written in a smaller font.

BPCA

British Pest
Control
Association



Student Guide

Simple steps to prevent pests



British Pest Control Association pest awareness guide for students

Pests can become a major problem on campus, costing students and universities hundreds of thousands of pounds each year.

Our guide aims to help students learn more about pests that can be found in the UK and what they can do to help prevent them.

Here you can find practical advice and tips for getting to grips with pests, and get advice on finding a trained and trusted pest management company.

bpca.org.uk/pestaware
Driving excellence in pest management

 **01332 294 288**
 **@britpestcontrol**

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What is a pest?

Wild animals, birds and insects are just that - wild. They are only considered a pest when their activities come into conflict with people and potentially pose a health or safety risk.

Pests can present a number of issues, from stings and bites to the spread of disease and damage to property.

It is always better to prevent rather than treat a pest issue where possible, so taking a few simple steps to deter pests can save you a lot of time, money and stress.



An adult bed bug. Makes you itch just looking at it! But knowing the signs of common pests can help prevent a serious infestation.

Me or the landlord?

The first thing you'll want to know is if you're responsible for sorting out a pest issue. Unfortunately that can be quite complicated and will depend on a number of factors.

It's a good idea to check the rental agreement before you move in and to ask what the landlord's arrangements are in regard to pest control.

The situation is likely to be different in student halls, so check the policy in relation to pest control.

If you are faced with an infestation issue, seek advice from a pest professional, such as a BPCA member. You can find more information on page 9 of this document.

When to call in the professionals

If you suspect a pest problem, check out our A-Z of Pests at bpca.org.uk. The A-Z has lots of information about different types of pests, advice on how to deal with an issue and when to call in the professionals.

BPCA's House of Pests (bpca.org.uk/houseofpests) is also a good place to start if you spot something unusual and you're not sure what it could be.

In the event an infestation does take hold, make sure the pest professional you choose has the correct training, qualifications and insurance.

All BPCA members must fulfil these requirements and follow our Codes of Conduct. One of the quickest ways to check the credentials of a pest management professional is to ask if they are members of the BPCA.

Remember to ask for an invoice or receipt for any work you have carried out, as your landlord may be able to reimburse you for this if agreed in advance (or sometimes after the fact, depending on the urgency of the pest issue).



A German cockroach. You can read about cockroaches and how to prevent them on page 4.

Food factors

How you dispose of food and household waste is one of the most important factors in avoiding a pest problem.

General good housekeeping will help deter pests from moving in - but the most crucial thing of all is to look after the bin.

BPCA's top tips for pest prevention are:

- Food and leftovers should be stored in sealed containers. A few crumbs are easy to ignore, but for a mouse, that's practically a weekly shop.
- Waste should be bagged and put into a bin with a secure lid. Indoor bins should be emptied and cleaned regularly.
- Outside bins should be placed away from entry points such as doors and windows. They should also have a securely fitting lid to ensure pests can't get inside.
- A vacuum cleaner is a great defender against pests. Regular cleaning with a vacuum can help deter some pests, while also getting rid of any food debris that might attract others.
- Keeping your kitchen area clean is crucial. A messy kitchen can become a restaurant for all kinds of pests.
- When buying stored food products such as flour, pasta and grains, do a quick visual check of the package to make sure there is no pest damage. Insects such as rice weevils and booklice can infest stores food products that you buy from your local supplier and then there is a chance you will take them home.

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Bed bugs



Type: Insect, parasite

Appearance: Small, flat, brown

Diet: Blood

Weakness: Extreme heat/steam, professional insecticide

Biting: Yes

Signs of an infestation

- Red, irritating bites, typically in rows on your neck, shoulders, back, legs or arms
- Small reddish-brown clusters of insects or dark faecal spots (about 1mm wide) that look like an ink dot are usually found on the bed frame, upholstery or the bottom side of the mattress
- Small blood smears on the bed linen or headboard
- Bed bug moult skins, pale white eggs, empty eggshells are quite small but still visible to the human eye
- And the most obvious but not always the first sign you find - seeing the small brown insects themselves, in and around your bed frame or sleeping area.

Consult a pharmacist for advice if you develop an itchy rash, eczema or swelling, and if it gets worse, contact your GP.



Allergic reaction to a bed bug bite on a person's back. Credit: James Heilman, MD

How to prevent bed bugs

It's very hard to prevent a bed bug infestation as they are generally spread through bad luck.

Where do they come from?

Bed bugs are the travel experts of the pest world, moving around looking for fine cuisine to sample (it's us, we're the cuisine).

It's not always obvious where they've come from, but commonly they attach themselves to luggage, bags, clothes or secondhand furniture and even laptops.

Bed bugs can also move from one room to another in search of food or after mating. This means that your infestation could have come from a neighbouring property if you live in student halls or terraced housing.

How to treat a bite

Bed bugs feed on any skin exposed while sleeping, leaving red lumps in lines or clusters, with multiple bites grouped together. See image (R).

Bedbug bites usually clear up on their own in a week or so.

Like all insect bites, no matter how much a bite itches, you must not scratch it. This could cause an infection, which can lead to fever, nausea and further pain. A severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) is also possible but rare. Put a clean, damp cloth on the affected area to help with the itching and any swelling.

However, you can do some things to reduce your chances of getting an infestation. Before staying or moving into accommodation, make sure you check for signs of bed bugs. Take a look for signs around the bed, paying particular attention to the edges of the mattress, headboard and around the skirting.

Avoid putting your luggage directly on the bed or furniture before checking as this is the easiest way for bed bugs to attach themselves to your belongings.

Visit bpca.org.uk/bedbugs for more information.



A bed bug infestation on a mattress. Credit: Andy Rose, Bounty Pest Control

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Cockroaches



Type: Insect

Appearance: German: yellowy/brown, ≈15mm

Oriental: brown/mahogany, ≈24mm

Diet: Omnivores, known to eat refuse, faecal matter, even other cockroaches

Weakness: Professional insecticides

Two of the most common types of cockroach pest in the UK are the Oriental cockroach (bottom right) and the German cockroach (shown above).



Cockroaches are considered among the most primitive insects on the planet. Fossil evidence suggests that even cavemen had to deal with cockroach infestations.

Where do they come from?

Generally, as a rule, cockroaches don't like our British weather (who does?) so they do live within buildings.

Oriental cockroaches are hardier than the German species and, in the summer months, you may

even see them outdoors around bin areas where they forage. However, this is very uncommon.

You're likely to find German cockroaches behind appliances where you have warm motors, such as your oven or fridge.

Oriental cockroaches will thrive in cool, damp areas such as basements and drains.

Both these species of cockroach can often be found around the heating ducts and boiler rooms of large, centrally heated buildings.

You should also look for cockroaches around pipes, stoves, and sinks, especially in humid areas like bathrooms and around laundry appliances.

Areas with food, water and dark spaces to hide are ideal environments for cockroaches to live.

Do cockroaches bite?

It's incredibly rare for cockroaches to bite humans.

Although they're omnivorous and have been known to eat dead human flesh, there are very few reported cases of a cockroach biting a person.

How to prevent cockroaches

1

Keep areas clean and tidy - clean all surfaces thoroughly to remove any food residue and sweep up any discarded food debris.

2

Try not to leave dirty dishes and utensils in the sink.

3

Keep bins covered, clean, and emptied regularly.



Cockroaches can survive for up to a month without food; so whilst your kitchen may not be dirty now, they could be surviving on food that was consumed a while ago.

4

Areas such as the top of or beneath your refrigerator are warm and food collects there, attracting cockroaches, so clean these areas regularly.

5

If you buy any second-hand kitchen appliances like fridges and freezers, make sure you give them a check over and a good clean to ensure you have not transported any little hitchhikers.



Keep an eye out for small pill-shaped capsules called oothecas. These are egg cases produced by female cockroaches and will eventually release nymphs.

Visit bpca.org.uk/cockroach for more information.

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Fleas



Type: Insect, parasite

Appearance: Flattened laterally, usually dark mahogany

Diet: Blood

Weakness: Professional insecticides

Fleas are ectoparasitic insects, meaning they live on the outside of a host animal.

They feed on the blood of mammals and birds. It's estimated that there are around 2,500 species of flea in the world.

Where do they come from?

Fleas can live on any warm-blooded animal but are often found to be living on birds, domestic animals and rodents.

When not feeding on a host, fleas are mainly active in communal rooms, places where pets sleep and wherever there is most activity.

Fleas and their eggs can be commonly found in soft furnishings which provide plenty of insulation, such as carpets, pet bedding, clothes and upholstered furniture.

If you have an active infestation, you may see fleas jumping in your carpet and furniture.

Around 95% of flea eggs, larvae and pupae live in the environment, not on pets.

Although it's less common, humans can host fleas; the fleas will hitch a ride on your clothes, your skin or hair.

Tell-tale signs that fleas are about

- Bites on you or other members of the household, usually around ankles and legs
- If you have been holding or stroking a pet, you may find bites on your arms
- And the most obvious sign of a flea infestation? Seeing them! When they aren't busy leeching our AB positive, fleas can often be spotted jumping around on soft furnishings.

What do fleas eat?

Adult fleas feed on the blood of humans and animals; females need the blood of their host animal in order to produce viable eggs.

How to prevent fleas

Pet maintenance - apply veterinary approved flea products to your pet on a regular basis.

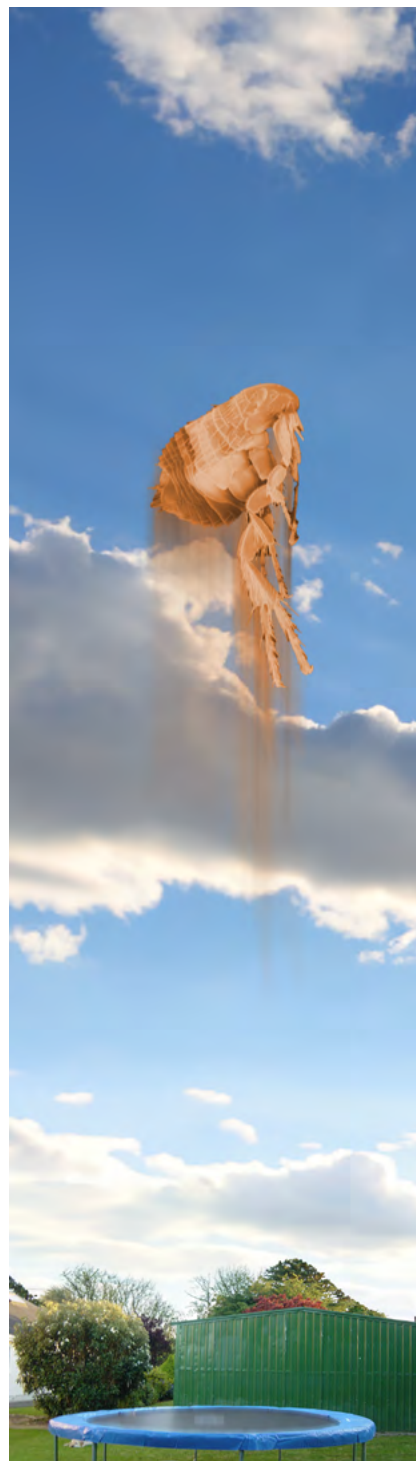
Walkies - when returning home, brush out your pet's fur before going inside.

Vacuuming - frequently vacuum the communal areas, especially carpeted areas in and around any furniture that is used by a pet. Pay particular attention to the edge of the carpet.

Washing - regularly wash your bedding, blankets and other washable items in the hottest water possible.

Gardening - keep your garden tidy by mowing your lawn and raking up any leaves, grass or bush clippings, giving fleas fewer places to hide.

Visit bpca.org.uk/fleas for more information.



Fleas possess an astonishing ability to leap heights of up to 150 times their body length, making them one of nature's most agile and proficient jumpers.

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Rats



Type: Mammal/ rodent

Appearance: Brown fur, approx 23cm (without tail), small eyes and ears, tail shorter than body

Diet: Will chow down on virtually anything

Weakness: Traps, professional rodenticides

There are two species of rat in Britain, the most common of which is *Rattus Norvegicus*, otherwise known as the Brown Rat or Common Rat.

The other is *Rattus Rattus*, commonly referred to as the Black Rat or Ship Rat, which is now rarely found in the UK.



Cinderblock, wood, metal, bone - rats' teeth will take on pretty much any challenge, which is why they can cause untold damage to both homes, businesses and the occasional finger. Credit: Alexey Krasavin

Where do they come from?

Home for the brown rat is somewhere that provides food, water and shelter. In houses, they will live in roof spaces, wall cavities or under floorboards. In gardens, they will burrow into grassy banks or under sheds and decking. Rat holes beside solid structures are sure signs of a nest.

Tell-tale signs that rats are about

1

Common signs of rats include dark, pellet-shaped faeces resembling a raisin. Left in clusters, with rats leaving up to 40 droppings in one night.

2

Another clue can be gnawing marks on electrical cables, woodwork, plastic, brick and lead pipes, as well as torn bags of foodstuff and materials.

3

In dusty, unused areas of a building, rats often leave footprints or tail marks.

4

Rats can also leave a more unusual calling card; a greasy residue professionals call 'smear marks'. Smear marks occur from their coats rubbing on the walls as they make their way along these trails to their nest or in search of food.

5

You may also be able to hear the rats scratching, gnawing and scuttling around. Brown rats are prone to grinding their teeth and chattering when stressed, both very distinctive sounds.

Health risk

Rats communicate and mark their territory by urinating everywhere they go, representing a significant public health risk.

They can carry many nasty diseases, which can spread to humans, normally through rats' urine or body coming into contact with food preparation areas.

These include:

- Leptospirosis (often referred to as Weil's disease)
- Salmonella
- Listeria
- Hantavirus.

Here are our tips for managing waste, to prevent rat infestations:

- **Always keep lids sealed properly -**
Even small gaps create easy access for rats, which can squeeze through a space as thin as two fingers.
- **Get broken bins replaced -**
Make sure any cracked or broken bins are replaced.
- **Place bins carefully -**
Bins offer a great platform for rats to reach new areas, so keep them away from windows and doors.
- **Don't dump food straight into your wheelie bin -**
Rats can easily detect food. Keep waste covered in compostable liners, plastic bags, or refuse sacks to control odors and prevent it from sticking to container sides.
- **Look after your bins -**
It's a good idea to give your indoor and outdoor bins a rinse with disinfectant and hot water helping prevent rat-attracting smells.

Visit [bPCA.org.uk/rats](https://www.bPCA.org.uk/rats) for more information.

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Mice



Type: Mammal, rodent

Appearance: Light brown/grey, small feet, pointed snout with thin whiskers, 60-90mm long, tail same length as body

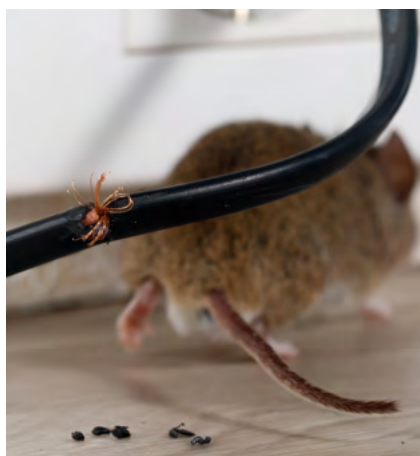
Diet: Omnivores but love cereal

Weakness: Traps, professional rodenticides

Mice are a part of British wildlife - but when they take up residence with you, they can be a cause for concern.

In regards to pest management, there are two common types of mouse in the UK to be aware of:

- House mouse (*Mus musculus domesticus*)
- Field mouse or wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*).



Mouse signs include small droppings resembling black rice grains, gnaw marks on various materials, and damaged stored food.

Where do they come from?

House mice are found in and around human structures as they rely on warmth and shelter for nesting sites, and our readily available food sources.

Nests are often built in places such as roof spaces, under floors or in wall cavities, sheds, basements, storage boxes and wherever there is access to a good source of food and safe, warm harbourage to breed.

Mice are naturally inquisitive and can squeeze through cracks as small as 5mm, to search for food and shelter.

If a neighbouring property has an infestation, this can spread very quickly into your home.

Proofing against entry is a good measure, however this is something that your landlord could look into, as structural defects that allow pest entry are often a landlord's responsibility.

The dangers: why we control mice

Although mice are often considered to be cute by some people, they are a public health pest and can cause serious harm.

Mice have been known to spread nasty diseases - such as *Salmonella* and *Listeria* - to humans through their urine, droppings and bedding.

Mice have a need to mark their territory with their urine and due to their sporadic eating habits, build nests near food sources. This puts anyone with an infestation at risk of food poisoning.

How to prevent mice

1

Ensure that food is stored in airtight containers and make sure any food debris is cleaned up straight away.

2

Cover any household waste where mice can get access to it and close dustbin lids.

Recycling containers should also be washed to remove any food residue.

3

Good hygiene practices won't eliminate a mouse problem, but poor practices will attract them.

4

If you have a lot of vegetation or climbing vines against the side of the property, cut these back as they're a perfect way for mice to enter.

The tell-tale signs that mice are about

- Mice droppings - these are often black, and about the size and shape of a grain of rice. Fresh droppings will be soft and moist. Common places to find mouse droppings are under the kitchen sink, around central heating boilers and in roof spaces
- Strong ammonia smell - mice urinate frequently
- Smear marks - these are dark grey marks left on surfaces by repeated contact with the oils in mouse fur
- Nests - sometimes nests can be found indoors for example in lofts, under floorboards or in airing cupboards
- Damage to stored food in cupboards and pantries
- Gnaw marks on materials such as wood, carpets, paper, pipe cables and furniture.

Visit [bPCA.org.uk/mice](https://www.bPCA.org.uk/mice) for more information.

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Silverfish

**Type:** Insect

Appearance: Silver-grey, cigar-shaped, 12mm long, 3 long bristles at the tail end

Diet: Residues of starchy substances such as glues, wallpaper paste and carbohydrate food debris

Weakness: Eliminating damp conditions

Silverfish do not bite humans. They lack the mouthparts necessary to bite or sting. Their primary concern is as a nuisance pest, as they can cause damage to household items such as books, wallpaper, clothing, and stored food items due to their feeding habits on starchy materials and proteins.

While they are not harmful to humans or pets, their presence can be unsettling and lead to potential damage to personal belongings.



Silverfish may be mistaken for the firebrat (above), another pest which looks similar and may also appear in your home.

Where do they come from?

Silverfish thrive in moist, humid environments, typically preferring damp areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, basements, attics, and laundry rooms.

In nature, they are often found under rocks, logs, and leaf litter, as well as in caves.

Silverfish can enter homes through various entry points, including cracks and gaps in walls, floors, and foundations, as well as poorly sealed windows and doors and gaps around plumbing fixtures.

How to treat silverfish

1

Conduct regular inspections of your home to identify and address any new signs of silverfish activity.

2

Ensure proper ventilation in damp areas like basements, bathrooms, and kitchens by using fans and opening windows.

3

Repair any leaks in pipes, taps, and ceilings to eliminate sources of moisture.

4

Store food in airtight containers and keep kitchen surfaces clean.

5

Remove stacks of paper, cardboard boxes, and other starchy materials that silverfish can feed on.

6

Buy a dehumidifier - they remove moisture from the air and improve air quality.

7

Dry washing outdoors where possible - if you have to dry clothes indoors, don't leave them on radiators and make sure to keep the room well-ventilated and, as mentioned, use a dehumidifier.



Remember to dry out floor mats and towels as these may harbour silverfish.

8

Eliminating persistent damp issues should help solve the issue, however there are insecticides available for amateur use.

Apply these around baseboards, under sinks, in cracks and crevices, and other places where silverfish are likely to hide. Choose products labeled for silverfish control.

Remember: if using any kind of pesticide product, you should always read the label very carefully.

9

If the infestation is severe or persistent, consider hiring a professional pest controller. BPCA pest controllers can provide more comprehensive treatments and advice on preventing future infestations.

Visit [bpca.org.uk/silverfish](https://www.bpca.org.uk/silverfish) for more information.

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Who pays?

It depends. In many cases structural defects that may encourage pests such as open drains, holes in brickwork, cracks around windows and gaps under doors are the landlord's responsibility - and they should pay to deal with a pest issue arising from those faults.

But if environmental factors such as an overflowing bin or poor housekeeping have attracted pests into the property, the costs of dealing with the infestation may fall to the tenants.

It's important to know who to contact if pests become a problem.

If you move into a property and you suspect an infestation is already ongoing, and you can prove that you are not the cause, this is often the landlord's responsibility to deal with.

Make sure that any correspondence with your landlord or letting agent, particularly relating to an agreement to pay for professional pest control, is captured in writing, whether by email or text.

Inventory checklist

When you move in, and you're doing your initial inventory, it's worth doing some checks around the property - any identified pest issues can be reported quickly and get dealt with by the landlord. Look out for smear marks, droppings, burrows outside the property, possible ingress points such as holes in the brickwork. And of course, spotting the actual pests themselves!

Who's responsible?

When you first move into your student property, check your contract. Find out who is responsible for pest control and make sure you know who to report issues to when you suspect a problem.

Early identification is key in solving pest problems and preventing them from getting out of hand.

If you need advice on a pest issue, don't hesitate to contact BPCA - we're here to help.

Call the professionals

For any pest infestation, we would always recommend contacting a professional pest control company.

They are trained in pest management and will have access to a range of professional use products which are not available to the public.

Knowing how much, where, and when to deploy products is where professionals are able to take control of situations efficiently.

Professional pest controllers will take an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to tackling your infestation.

A pest professional will have access to monitoring equipment, which they will use to confirm entry points into your property, the size of the infestation and to track the pest to its source.

They can then recommend a proofing strategy and decide on the best course of action in terms of control.



BPCA members are trained, qualified and have access to products not available to the public. To find a BPCA member near you, visit: www.bpca.org.uk/find.

A 2023 investigation by The Tab (thetab.com) found that Russell Group universities spent over £4.8 million on pest control in the five years to 2021/22, with 3,210 pest control jobs recorded at one university alone over the same time period.