

Pests and Infestations Policy

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure all Housing Officers are working consistently when dealing with infestations within a tenant's home or in communal blocks/land. It is vital that where appropriate Falcon Housing Association C.I.C (FHA) works in partnership with the Local Authority's Environmental Services department to deliver an excellent customer service.
- 1.2 Reports of infestation must always be handled sensitively. Consideration needs to be given to the causes of the problem and peoples living arrangements. The condition of the building and record of repair should be taken into consideration and any physical or psychological conditions of the customer/s should also be considered. Problems should not be looked at in isolation especially where an infestation occurs within a property linked to a communal area – neighbours and surrounding areas may be contributing. Where an issue is identified and treated by the tenant it is important to consider if remedial work is required e.g., to block up holes or gaps where pests may have gained access in the first instance to help prevent re-infestation.
- 1.3 The following information is provided to assist teams when dealing with enquiries about infestation and pest control. In most instances the customer can be referred directly to the Local Authorities Environmental Services Agency (ES) and will be advised of the charge/s by them. There may be discounts available to tenants in receipt of Income related benefits and Housing Benefit, however proof of benefits may be required. Each area office must have a current list of Local Authorities they operate within and what their charges and timescales for responses to infestation are.

2.0 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENTS?

- 2.1 Below is a table for who would be responsible to pay for any treatments to eradicate infestations.

INFESTATION	HOUSES	COMMUNAL BLOCKS
Wasp Nest	Tenant	FHA
Fleas	Tenant	Would need further investigation with ES
Bird Fleas	Tenant	Would need further investigation with ES
Garden Ants	Tenant	FHA
Silverfish	Tenant	FHA
Bedbugs	Tenant	FHA
Carpet Beetle	Tenant	FHA
Cockroaches	Tenant	FHA
Pharaoh Ants	Tenant	FHA
Mice	Tenant	FHA
Rats	Tenant	FHA
Squirrels	Tenant	FHA

However there maybe occasions when further investigation may be required by both FHA & Environmental Services.

3.0 INVESTIGATING AN INFESTATION:

- 3.1. It can be very difficult to determine 'the cause' of an infestation and even more difficult to establish responsibility, therefore when carrying out an investigation it is always advisable to seek guidance from Environmental Services if the cause is not clear. It is also important to assess any hazards that may be causing the infestation.
- 3.2. When investigating cause/fault' it may be more appropriate to look at it as 'reasonable responsibility' for example if the problem is cat fleas, then the tenant would be responsible however if the problem was bird fleas and this could be linked to birds nesting under the eaves then this would be the responsibility of FHA and a repair may also be required after the treatment is administered.
- 3.3. Wasp nests, garden ants, silverfish & carpet beetles and squirrels would be down to the tenant unless it was in a communal area. Biscuit beetles, spider beetles, dermestes (hide) beetles and any other insects which scavenge on food debris or infest stored food would be the tenant's responsibility unless an external communal source such as a bird's nest could be located and then FHA should consider carrying out treatment. Mice infestations would be the responsibility of the individual tenant. If the infestation is more widespread FHA will investigate the source. If it's found that the source of an infestation is caused by an individual property, the responsibility will fall with the tenant, and they will be recharged with the costs of both the investigation and treatment to remove the infestation.
- 3.4. For any infestations found in wall cavities or roof spaces to dwellings immediately inform Property Maintenance or local maintenance contractor who will advise if any gaps can be blocked which may prevent a repeat infestation.
- 3.5. To monitor repeat infestations or problem areas a monitoring sheet should be kept updated.

4.0 VULNERABLE TENANTED PROPERTIES

- 4.1. In cases where it is suspected that the customer's vulnerability is/could be an issue it is important to note this in our records.
- 4.2. In cases where a customer has been identified as vulnerable consideration will be given to providing reasonable assistance. This is not necessarily in relation to paying for any work but may be in relation to arranging for work to be carried out on behalf of the customer.
- 4.3. Particular regard should be given to cases where the infestation may cause deterioration of a medical condition.

5.0 PIGEONS

- 5.1. Should an area have repeated/consistent problems with pigeons nesting and causing a health risk to tenant's the area must contact Environmental Services and arrange for a joint visit for a specific quotation. Following the initial clearance, the tenant must be advised that it is now their responsibility to keep clear their own 'area' e.g., Balcony.

6.0 HONEYBEES

- 6.1. Environmental Services will not remove Honeybees unless they are a threat or danger to persons/property, however there are various service providers who will remove them.

7.0 COMMUNAL BLOCKS/AREAS/LAND

- 7.1. If the infestation occurs in a block of flats, then the Housing Officer must liaise with Environmental Services to determine the cause (where possible), the remedy and the cost. If rats are spotted in gardens the tenant/s should be advised to refrain from feeding birds and water features should be switched off and drained

8.0 MISUSE OF PROPERTY

- 8.1. Where infestations are a direct result of a dirty/unsanitary property then you must also undertake an investigation into the problem with the Care Provider, taking action if necessary to enforce tenancy conditions. You may also need to liaise with Environmental Services as part of the investigation.

9.0 ONGOING MONITORING OF INFESTATIONS

- 9.1. After a report of an infestation is received it is important to continue to monitor the situation after treatment. This is important in cases where a customer contacts us to report a problem and is advised that it is their responsibility to deal with the matter. If the problem remains untreated the issue could spread to neighbouring properties or communal areas. Housing Officers should chase up the report with the customer and ascertain if treatment has been carried out. In cases where it is suspected that the issue has not been dealt with Housing Officer's should remind tenants of their tenancy conditions and enforce them as necessary.
- 9.2. Housing Officers need to ensure that they have a robust process for recording reports of infestation where advice is given to the tenant, and we won't treat to ensure all cases are chased up.

10 Policy Review

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed periodically and every three years. It can also be updated at any time to incorporate suggested improvements, lessons learnt, best practice guidelines and changes to legislation.

Review Process			
Policy review frequency:		Responsible for review:	
This policy / procedure will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis		This policy / procedure will be reviewed by: Chief Operating Officer	
Version Control			
Version	Date approved	Next review date	Author / Title
V3	Feb 2023	Feb 2026	Lesley Earnshaw