

is consumed. Accidental poisoning of a non-target animal is a criminal offence.

Excellent advice on treatment is available at www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates under Advisory Leaflets.

Or contact our Help Line on the number below and they will send you a copy.

Alternatively you may prefer to leave it to the experts. This has advantages in that a professional service will know precisely what to do in any given situation and can advise you on preventative measures.

If you would like to use the Council's pest control service please contact our Help Line on the number given on the back of this leaflet. We will send a fully trained operative, usually within five working days, to commence treatment and will continue to call back until the infestation has cleared.

Other leaflets in this series:

Ants
Fleas
Foxes
Rats
Wasps



For further information on our pest control service, telephone our Help Line on **01737 276000**

or visit our website at **www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk**

Environmental Health Services
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Town Hall
Castlefield Road
Reigate
Surrey, RH2 0SH

The House Mouse

Unlike its big brother the common rat, which is universally scorned by society, the mouse divides opinions. Some (perhaps with Mickey or Jerry in mind) adopt a fairly tolerant, even affectionate attitude towards the house mouse. For others it sends a shiver down the spine just contemplating an encounter, but, however you feel, there are several good reasons why the house mouse should not be given house room.

■ Mice and men

The uniformly grey, house mouse* (*Mus domesticus*) is as its name suggests, well adapted to living in close contact with us particularly where food is available. Due to its small size (7-9cm or 2¾"-3½" not including the tail) and ability to squeeze through extremely small openings (e.g. the diameter of a pencil), the house mouse can live and breed in almost any available space including cavity walls, ceiling voids, under floors and behind skirting boards.

*There are other mouse species, the 'wood mouse' for example, which occasionally enter buildings in the autumn. This mouse is larger than its 'townie' cousin and is orange-brown with a white belly.

Far from being cute the house mouse can cause extensive damage to property due to their habit of gnawing. They do this to keep their teeth in good order and so will gnaw on wood, plastic, electric cable or anything they come across. Of course, where damage is done to electrical installations, there is a significant risk of fire.

They also eat and contaminate our food and carry a number of infectious diseases harmful to us and other animals. Wherever they go they shed hairs, dribble urine (mice have weak bladders) and deposit droppings and in so doing contaminate the very surfaces that you later might prepare food on.

Mice then, like rats, *are* a public health menace.

■ Danger... Mouse!

As a first line defence against infestation, take a close look around the outside of your house and repair any openings through which mice could enter. For example fill any gaps around pipes where they pass through walls and make sure doors fit tightly and air bricks are intact.

Apart from shelter mice also need a food supply. Good hygiene around the home e.g. sweeping up spillages, cleaning up food residues / preventing accumulations, removing rubbish and not leaving food intended for pets lying around will reduce opportunities for them to exploit. Keeping food in mouse-proof containers – tins, jars and lidded bins – is also a good strategy particularly where problems have previously arisen because despite best efforts infestations do sometimes occur.

When they do you have two options: treat it yourself or use a professional pest management service such as the Council provides.

■ Eeek a mouse!

Various traps and rodenticides can be purchased for use against mice if you want to treat the problem yourself (though we do not support the use of live catch traps). Be sure to follow all instructions very carefully. If traps are accessible they can cause injury to children and pets, and rodenticides are equally toxic to man and animals, if sufficient