

Pest control advice



High Peak Borough Council
working for our community

Ants

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

Please note that all pest control fees for treatment are non-refundable

We only treat ants that are inside a property.

What they look like

The black worker garden ant has a black segmented body about 5mm long.

The queen is brown and about 15mm long.

Further information

The garden ant nests in gardens around buildings, under concrete paths and so on. They may also nest in cavity walls or in the space under the floor of a building.

They do not carry disease and don't bite or sting. They can be a nuisance during mid to late summer when lots of winged and non-winged ants leave the nest. This normally happens in one day, during which all but the successfully mated females die.

In late spring, eggs hatch into white larvae in about 3 to 4 weeks. The life cycle is complete in two months and in good conditions a nest may last for several years.

How to treat and control them yourself

Find the nest and destroy it. It should be unearthed and the ants doused with an insecticidal spray. A fly type spray insecticide is usually adequate. Buy them at hardware stores, garden centres and supermarkets. Follow the instructions on the container carefully.

If you can't find the nest and the ants are emerging either inside or outside the property, do the following:

- outside – spray ant powder or insecticide in and around where they may be coming from. You may need to repeat the treatment until activity stops
 - inside – it is essential to spray insecticide all along the wall or all around the window or door to make sure there is a complete band of insecticide if the ants are coming through cracks around skirting boards, windows or doors. You must use a long lasting effect spray so it will last for up to 3 months.
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How we will treat them

We use a spray treatment – very similar to the instructions above. The room will be safe to go into straight after the treatment.

Bats

We cannot treat for bats as they are a protected species. If you have a bat in a room, turn the lights out and open the windows. In most cases, the bat will fly straight out.

Contact English Nature on 01629 815095 for advice.

Bed bugs

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

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What they look like

Bed bugs can grow to 6mm long. They are red brown and quite flat looking. They do not have any wings and can live up to 10 months.

Further information

Bed bugs are a parasite and are active at night. They feed on human blood and can swallow up to 7 times their own body weight in one feed. They can cause severe allergic reactions.

You find them in crevices of beds, furniture and skirting boards. They are common in hotels, student accommodation and hostels.

How to treat and control them yourself

Use an insect spray designed for the treatment of bed bugs which you can buy from any hardware store. You must follow the instructions on the container carefully. Or, you could contact a private pest control company.

How we will treat them

The whole house needs to be clean and tidy and the bed stripped and dismantled as much as possible. We will treat the property where necessary.

Bees

What they look like

Bees can easily be mistaken for wasps. The bee's body is more furry than the wasps and little yellow pollen sacs can usually be seen on the hind limbs. There are many different kinds of bees:

- Masonry / Sand Bees burrow into soft mortar or soil and lay a single egg at the end of each hole. They do not form large colonies. They cause minor damage and are unlikely to sting. Chemical treatments can be used but they are best left alone. Damaged mortar should be re-pointed.
- Bumble Bees are large (up to 30mm). They often nest below ground – using old mouse holes – but may use a bird box or shed for example. A nest may contain between 100 and 200 bees. They rarely sting – unless when severely provoked and are a beneficial insect. General advice is to 'leave them alone'.
- Honeybees are important pollinators and should not be killed unless essential for public safety. They can form large nests within cavity walls, lofts, sheds, hedges and trees for example. A colony can have up to 40,000 bees.

More information about identification of bees is available at www.bbka.org.uk (British Beekeepers Association)

Pest status

Honey and bumble bees cause no damage in the garden, they are vital pollinators for insect pollinated fruit and vegetables. Bees will not normally sting unless they think there is a severe threat to the colony. Once a bee has stung, it dies.

Honeybee swarms:

Only Honeybees swarm. This is a natural process where a queen leaves a colony and her followers mass around her. It typically happens during very hot weather in May - June. Swarms happen when a colony of bees produce more than one queen, the colony then splits and one of the queens leaves the hive along with her workers to find a suitable site to create a new colony.

If you have a swarm on your property, it is best to leave them alone.

If a swarm has settled for more than a couple of hours, and is easy to reach, you can contact a beekeeper who may wish to come and remove the swarm for you. Beekeepers do not work for the council and don't have to respond. Any arrangement you make with them is a private agreement. They may charge for their time and travelling expenses.

The council may be able to help if the swarm is not easily accessible, or no beekeeper is available. We are unable to 'collect' bees and can only use a chemical to destroy them. We are reluctant to carry out control measures for bees on environmental grounds. Our policy is to destroy bees only in extreme circumstances and where they form a danger and a risk to public health.

What to do if you are stung

- remove the sting if it remains
- wash the area with soap and water
- put a cold flannel on the area
- raise the part of the body that has been stung to stop it swelling
- use a spray or cream containing local anaesthetic or antihistamine to stop the itching and swelling
- take painkillers, such as paracetamol if it is very painful
- do not scratch the area as it may become infected

Bee stings are rarely dangerous and need only some antihistamine or local anaesthetic cream from your pharmacist. Ask your pharmacist for advice.

The redness and swelling are usually due to the allergy rather than an infection. Antibiotics are rarely needed in the first 48 hours. Call your doctor if the symptoms will not go away or if you are stung in the mouth, around the throat or receive multiple stings. Contact NHS Direct 0845 46 47 or 111 if you require advice about aftercare.

About 3 in 100 people are strongly allergic to bites and stings and can be very ill. Most people who have an allergic reaction have been stung before without an allergic reaction. Some people never have another allergic reaction again after their first. This is why they are almost impossible to predict.

You may need emergency treatment if, immediately after being stung, you have these symptoms:

- swelling or itching anywhere else on the body
- wheezing or headache
- you feel sick
- a fast heart rate or you feel faint
- you find swallowing difficult, or have a swollen face or mouth

Call 999 for an ambulance at once, as you may be having a generalised allergic reaction and this can be fatal.

Beetles

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

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There are many different types of beetle. If you have a problem with beetles, provide us with a sample of the insect for us to identify. We will then contact you to discuss it further.

Cockroaches

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

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What they look like

There are two types of cockroach:

- Oriental Cockroach: these are 17mm - 30mm long. They are dark brown with partial wings but they cannot fly. They can live for up to one and a half years.
- German Cockroach: these are 12mm - 15mm long and are yellow brown. The female lays one egg case that contains 30 eggs, which she carries with her.

Further information

Cockroaches are scavenging insects and are active at night. You will find them in warm areas and near to taps, sinks and drains. They are good climbers and produce a sour smell. This is from their faecal deposits, which can carry bacteria, which will contaminate human foodstuffs.

How to treat and control them yourself

Use a professional pest control officer either from the council or from a private pest control company. We don't recommend that you treat cockroaches yourself.

How we will treat them

We use either a spray or a gel treatment in the affected area. It is safe to enter the room after the treatment.

Colorado beetles

Colorado beetles are prohibited in the UK and any sightings must be reported to the council or Defra. It may arrive here by 'hitchhiking' in plant produce from overseas, such as potatoes, salads, etc.

What they look like

The adult beetle is about 10mm long and has 10 alternate black and yellow stripes running down its back. It is a similar shape to an overgrown ladybird. Immature Colorado beetles or larvae are between 3mm and 10mm long with black heads and a deep orange/brown to pinkish red body. They move freely and feed on potato foliage or other solanaceous (potato family) weeds, leaving oily black excrement. The larvae should not be confused with the similarly coloured pupae of ladybirds, which are similar in colour and shape but are immobile.

Where to report findings of Colorado beetle

Defra Plant Health and Seeds Inspector
Plant Health Division, Room 336 Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York YO1 7PX
Tel: 01904 455189
Fax: 01904 455199

Direct out of hours reports to the Defra Duty Room Tel 020 7270 8960

Information they will require

- your name, address and daytime telephone number
- the date, amount and where the beetles were found and whether they were dead or alive
- if found aboard a ship, the name of the ship and where it's docked
- the host/plant material or other item where the beetles were found
- any further information that will give clues about the beetle's country of origin, e.g. mark/brands on packaging

They may ask you to send the beetle(s) in a padded envelope by post, together with confirmation of the details above, and with any accompanying packaging to the Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ.

Fleas

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

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What they look like

There are four types of flea that bite humans. The human flea, the cat flea, the dog flea and the bird flea. They are reddish brown and are about 2mm long. Fleas can jump to about 15cm.

Further information

Fleas lay eggs after each blood meal. They are about the size of a pinhead and pearly white in colour.

When they hatch, they are about 1.5mm and then grow to about 5mm before they pupate. The pupa turns a brownish colour before turning into a flea and they rely on vibrations to hatch from the cocoon. Somebody walking on carpets or floorboards creates enough of a vibration for this process to happen.

At normal room temperature, the eggs hatch within 1 week. A flea's full life cycle is normally completed within 30 days in a centrally heated home but can take up to 100 days in cold surroundings.

Control measures

To help us before your treatment you should:

- remove all toys and decorative items from the floor
- remove all items from underneath furniture, for example under beds and so on
- Hoover all floors and upholstered furniture
- remove the Hoover bags and dispose of in the bin outside or if using a bagless Hoover, tip contents into the bin outside. Put part of a cat flea collar inside the Hoover bag to kill off any remaining fleas
- if necessary treat your pet for fleas
- scrape all of the gaps with a knife and then Hoover up if you have wooden floors
- cover up fish and any other animals in water as the pesticide we use is water soluble and will affect them

We may use a spray treatment or fumigate the room. If we fumigate the room, do not allow pets or young children into the property for up to 3 hours later and do not Hoover for at least 10 days. This gives enough time for the treatment to work fully. Ventilate the room well too.

If you want to treat fleas yourself, use a spray designed for the treatment of furniture and fabrics. Follow the instructions on the container fully. Hoover all carpets, floors, soft furnishings and along the bottom of skirting boards. Treat your pet for fleas and Hoover and wash their bedding. You must wash their bedding on a cycle of 50 degrees centigrade or more.

Flies

The council does not treat for flies but will treat for cluster flies:

[Fees and charges](#)

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What they look like

- cluster flies are black with a golden chest. They are about 6mm long.
- house flies are grey/black and about 6mm long.
- blue bottle flies are metallic blue with large red eyes. They are about 11mm long.

Further information

- cluster flies - the female lays eggs in damp soil and rotting vegetation. The eggs hatch in about 7 days and the larvae find earthworms to bore into and feed off. Adults feed on nectar during the summer and hibernate in the winter. Cluster flies look for shelter in the autumn which can sometimes be in houses, such as loft spaces. Large colonies can form and if the temperature rises during the winter they will emerge.
- house flies - the female can lay up to 150 eggs in rotting vegetation or animal faeces. The eggs hatch within 48 hours and the larvae develop in 1-2 weeks.
- blue bottles - females normally lay their eggs on meat but also on excrement. The eggs hatch within a day and burrow into the food source. They spread disease through food stuffs.

How to treat and control them yourself

Use a professional pest control officer either from the council or from a private pest control company. We don't recommend that you treat cluster flies yourself.

How we will treat them

We use a smoke canister to fumigate the affected area. You cannot enter the room for up to 3 hours after the treatment.

Mice

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

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What they look like

House mice are light brown and about 7cm – 8 cm long.

Further information

Mice are normally active at night. They can reproduce from 3 months and have a very short gestation period of about 28 days. One pair of mice can produce up to 60 offspring in their life.

How to treat and control them yourself

Buy poison or traps from any hardware store and follow the instructions carefully. Or contact a private pest control company.

How we will treat them

If the mice are in your loft, it must be boarded and if possible have a ladder. Our pest control officers have a step ladder.

We put bait boxes down which contain poison. Our products are approved for both indoor and outdoor use under the control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 as amended. The boxes are locked so only something the size of a rat or mouse can actually enter the box. The mice will feed in the box for 4 – 7 days and then they will die. We revisit twice to check that the treatment has worked and to collect any bait boxes or dead mice.

Moles

We cannot treat for moles. Contact a professional mole catcher - Mr Phil Johnson on 01663 751652 (Chinley), Mr Philip Marrs on 0781 258 6090 (New Mills) or other mole catchers will be happy to help.

What they look like

Adult moles are 12-16 cm long and weigh about 70-110 grams. Their fur is black and velvety and they have large spade-like forefeet. They have very small eyes and do not have any external ear flaps.

Further information

Moles are found throughout Britain where the soil is suitable for tunnelling. They live mainly underground and feed on earth worms and other insects. They are most active at dawn and dusk. They breed once a year, normally between February and June.

They can create unsightly molehills and can cause disease in sheep if their food is contaminated by moles.

Control measures

Please contact a private pest control company for advice.

Pigeons

We cannot treat for pigeons.

What they look like

Adult pigeons are 33cm long and weigh 280-560grams.

Further information

Pigeons breed throughout the year but mainly between March and July. They normally lay two white eggs, which hatch 18 days later. Up to nine broods can be produced a year. They build their nests on man-made structures and mainly feed on scraps and spillage from food outlets.

Pigeons foul near their nests. It is unsightly, can block gutters and drainpipes and, due to the droppings being acidic, erode stonework.

Pigeons can cause Salmonella and lung disease.

Control measures

Please contact a private pest control company.

Psocids (book lice)

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

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What they look like

Psocids are very small colourless insects found in plaster, cereals and books, often in warm humid conditions. These ant-like creatures are harmless. They are usually between 1mm and 2mm long, have six legs, no wings and long, developed antennae.

They are not an indication of poor hygiene and are common in the cleanest of homes.

Further information

Psocids prefer to live in dark, warm humid places, such as kitchens, bathrooms or other areas with high humidity.

Plaster drying out, inadequate ventilation or leaky pipes can cause high humidity.

Psocids can often be found in foods, such as flour, which naturally contain moisture.

How to control psocids

Reduce the humidity levels in the affected room, make sure it is thoroughly aired and dry to reduce the risk of moulds developing – denying the insect a food source. Dehumidifying reduces the moisture content of the air that these insects find essential.

Store packet foods in well ventilated cupboards, away from cookers and sources of steam. Allow sufficient space for good airflow.

Clean cupboards and storage areas regularly and do not allow food debris to build up in cracks and crevices. Ensure good stock rotation. Look closely in cupboards and packets for signs of infestation. Destroy infested items.

Regularly vacuum cracks and crevices with a narrow vacuum tip to remove any hiding insects.

Seal excess food in containers.

Seal possible hiding areas with caulk, especially around windows, cabinets, and mouldings and increase lighting. Remove leaf litter from around the home, this lowers the chance of an outside invasion.

Always check that any chemical that you use is suitable for the location/situation and take care if used near to any food.

Rats

We will treat for rats free of charge if they are a threat to public health.

By law, rats are the responsibility of the owner and/or occupier of a property to deal with – not the council.

We do regular sewer baiting to prevent the spread of rats.

You can use our pest control service or you can hire commercial pest controllers.

What they look like

Rats are brown with an off-white under belly. They can grow to 270mm long and have a tail length of up to 200mm.

Further information

Rats live close to other animals and humans and are usually active at night. They have very poor eyesight and are colour blind but have an excellent sense of touch, taste, smell and hearing. In favourable conditions, populations can grow rapidly. Rats are good swimmers, climbers, jumpers and burrowers.

Rats can carry leptospirosis, which may cause Weil's Disease.

Leptospirosis is a bacteria carried in rats' urine, which may contaminate water in lakes, rivers and water supply but not salt water. The risk of infection is greater in stagnant or slow-moving water, but can happen in swift moving streams especially where flash floods have washed out rat runs.

Direct contact with rats' urine or rat pollution can cause infection. Bacteria enters skin cuts and bruises, eyes, nose or mouth, and incubates for two to 12 days. Then a 'flu' like illness occurs for 2-3 weeks, causing fever, severe headache, pains in the back and calf, and total exhaustion.

Jaundice can develop and become Weil's disease. Food and water contaminated with rat excreta can cause salmonella infections. Parasites from rats include ringworm, tapeworm, ticks and fleas.

Silverfish or Firebrat

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

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What they look like

Adult silverfish are 20mm long. They are silver grey and do not have wings. Firebrat are a similar length, are white/brown and without any wings.

Further information

Silverfish are active at night and are common in damp conditions such as bathrooms and kitchens. They have an unusual way of mating. The male spins a web of silk thread ejecting semen at the bottom of the strand. He then encourages the female towards the globule. He holds the treat taut so that her body contacts the semen, which is then absorbed into her body.

Silverfish can cause damage to paper documents, textiles and dried fruits.

Firebrat are also active at night and are found in very warm environments such as ovens, near to fires and boiler rooms. They live on starchy foods and can live for up to 3 years.

How to treat and control them yourself

Buy an insect spray designed for the treatment of silverfish and firebrat from any hardware store. Follow the instructions on the container carefully. Or contact a private pest control company.

How we will treat them

We use a spray product in the affected room. It is safe to enter the room afterwards.

Squirrels

We cannot treat for squirrels. Contact a private pest control company.

What they look like

Adult squirrels are 25cm long and their tail is 22cm.

Further information

Squirrels normally build their nests in the hollow of trees but sometimes they can nest in lofts of houses. This can cause a problem as they gnaw on wood and possibly electrical wires.

They breed twice a year – their first litter is born around February–March and their second is born June–July.

They eat a range of food, such as nuts, fruit, young shoots and birds' eggs. Squirrels also bury food to eat later.

It is illegal to trap and release a squirrel to another area, as they are mostly a non-native species.

Control measures

It is difficult to stop squirrels causing damage to a garden.

Destroy their nests, this will discourage the squirrels from settling.

Do as much as possible to stop them getting into roof spaces, cut back any overhanging branches of trees that are close to the roof for example.

Put a plastic skirt around a single tree's trunk to prevent the squirrels from climbing.

If a squirrel has already got into a roof space, make sure that the squirrel and nest are removed and then block off the entry hole.

Check the roof timbers and any electrical wiring in case they have caused any damage, consult an expert to make sure this has been done correctly.

Wasps

Fee

[Fees and charges](#)

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We will only treat wasps that are at a height we can access, usually about the guttering height of a normal two storey house. Sometimes flowering ivy will attract a lot of wasps and other insects, but we cannot treat them unless there is a nest.

What they look like

The wasp has yellow and black markings. There is a waist between the back part of the body and the section where the wings are.

Honey bees are normally a more orangey brown and brown colour and are hairy.

Hover flies are very similar to wasps, but the yellow and black banding on a hover fly is more definite and even. It is also normally smaller than a wasp.

Further information

A wasps' nest is round, grey and paper-like in structure. The entrance hole is usually found at the base of the nest. A nest is normally only used once.

Wasps are most active during the day so the best time to treat is at dusk, when most of the wasps will be in the nest. Wasps normally start to die off around October – November time. This is when the queen leaves the nest to hibernate.

How to treat and control them yourself

Use an insecticidal powder or liquid that has a long lasting effect. Follow the instructions on the container carefully. If you decide to treat the nest yourself it may be advisable to treat the nest in the evening when the wasps are less active, however extreme care should be taken as there is a risk of getting stung.

As the wasps become active, they will tread on the treatment, taking it back into the nest – this will kill the queen, the wasps and the grubs. Some grubs may hatch, but they will leave the nest. The treatment will normally be successful within 3–4 days, but sometimes it may be necessary to re-treat.

How we will treat them

We will treat the wasps nest from the outside of the property and the insecticide will be applied into the entrance of the nest, where possible. The wasps will then continue to take this into the nest as they enter and exit the nest. The effect of the treatment may not be immediate it can take a couple of days or so for the treatment to kill all the remaining wasps.

We will not treat wasps from the inside of lofts, the treatment is done from the outside.