

Pest Control Policy

Policy Statement

Purpose

Orwell's vision is that everyone has a safe place to call home. It is the policy of Orwell to provide and maintain safe and comfortable homes for our customers.

Orwell Housing recognises that homes can be infested by pests such as pigeons, rodents, bedbugs, cockroaches, and other insects for a variety of reasons.

This policy seeks to ensure that there is a clear, consistent, and transparent approach to how we deal with pest control and management, as well as those aspects that are the responsibility of customers or third parties.

Pest control refers to the regulation or management of a species defined as a pest, usually because it is perceived to be detrimental to a person's health, ecology, or the economy.

For the purposes of this policy a pest is defined as any organism, usually an animal, judged as a threat to humans or to the homes that humans occupy.

We will apply this policy consistently and fairly, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Legal Obligations

Relevant legislation and regulatory standards are set out here:

- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
- The Public Health Acts 1936 and 1961
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Housing Acts 1985, 2004 and 2006 (as amended)
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Regulator for Social Housing's Home Standard

Orwell's Commitment

Orwell is committed to providing a safe and healthy living environment for all our customers. By implementing this pest control policy, we aim to prevent and control pest infestations in our properties and ensure the wellbeing of our customers.

The Property Service and the Housing Management Service are both responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Property Service will provide advice to customers and deal with any eradication works agreed, and Housing Management will address tenancy management issues such as poor housekeeping and deliberately keeping pests, such as pigeons.

We will ensure that all properties are well-maintained, including repairing any cracks or holes that could provide entry points for pests.

Orwell tenants and leaseholders are responsible for the removal and treatment of most common household pests and insect infestations within their property, unless there is clear evidence that the pests have arisen because Orwell has failed or neglected to fulfil its responsibility as the landlord, or where infestations affect communal areas, or are severe in nature and affect multiple properties within a limited geographical area.

We will provide information, advice and guidance to our customers on how to prevent pest infestations and how to deal with minor pest control problems, including advising on proprietary products available from hardware stores and supermarkets: however, customers will be responsible for all costs. Orwell will consider reimbursing costs upon provision of receipts where the problem is determined to be the responsibility of Orwell to resolve.

Orwell can provide contact details of companies who can offer a service to treat pests but cannot vouch for the performance of any company in treating pest problems: the cost of such services would usually be borne by customers unless the issue is determined to be Orwell's responsibility.

Where contractors are engaged by Orwell, they will be appropriately qualified and accredited (e.g. BPCA or equivalent) and will comply with relevant health and safety legislation including COSHH, ensuring safe and humane pest control practices.

We will signpost our customers to any third parties who may be able to assist in the event of a problem, such as the relevant local authority. We will signpost customers to other sources of support if we are unable to assist directly with a problem.

Orwell will deal with infestations that affect communal areas. If any infestation in communal areas or properties is caused by the behaviour of any customer (i.e. feeding birds on the ground), that customer may be recharged.

Orwell will intervene promptly in any cases of serious or persistent pest infestations where Orwell has a role to play in resolving the issues. In certain cases, the customer may be recharged for the cost of treating such infestations if the infestation is the direct result of a customer's actions.

In cases of serious infestation of rats and mice where they are present in substantial numbers, Orwell are obliged to take steps to remove the rats and mice and repair any damage they have caused.

We will use safe and effective pest control methods to eliminate pests, while minimising the risk to customers and the environment. We will work with third party pest control services where necessary and appropriate to control infestations.

We will communicate with customers about any treatment processes, including any necessary preparations and follow-up actions. We will monitor trends, repeat infestations and known hot spot areas to identify underlying issues and target preventative action of all properties to ensure that pest infestations do not recur.

We will take account of customers' vulnerabilities and provide additional support or intervention where pest issues pose a heightened risk to health, safety, or tenancy sustainment

Where pest issues indicate potential safeguarding concerns, including hoarding or self-neglect, referrals may be made to appropriate internal teams or external support agencies.

Any behaviour by customers found which may attract pests to their property, such as feeding or keeping pigeons or leaving open food sources which may attract rats is a tenancy breach and may result in action being taken against that tenancy.

Orwell will not take action to prevent wild animals such as deer and foxes from accessing gardens.

Orwell does have a responsibility to prevent birds or bats nesting or roosting in communal areas of a building, such as under the eaves. We do not have a responsibility to prevent birds or bats flying into private outdoor spaces, such as balconies.