

Policy name:	
Pest Control Policy	
Section:	Property Services
Exec responsible:	Director of Property Services
Review by:	Director of Property Services
Tenant review:	Yes
Authority to amend:	Chief Executive
Frequency of review:	Every three years
Last review:	November 2025
Next review:	November 2028
Responsibility for delivery:	Director of Property. Property Services Manager
Strategy:	Property and Building Safety Strategy (hazards)
Associated risk ID:	R2 – Failure to meet legal and regulatory requirements
Health & safety:	RAMS and COSH to be reviewed by PSM, and customers to be advised of any risks in writing prior to works commencing.
Equality & diversity:	It is important that bias not affect proper procedures for pest infestations, and that all residents be treated with respect. Reasonable adjustments may be required, and needs should be identified, sought to be met and responded to.
Associated costs and value for money:	
Associated documents:	Chargeable Repairs Policy

VERSION CONTROL			
Version Number	Sections Amended	Date of update	Approved by
1.0	First issue	November 2025	Executive Team

CONTENT:

1. Introduction
 2. What is a pest infestation
 3. Reporting pests
 4. What are Cornerstones' responsibilities
 5. Process to address and resolve pest related hazards
 - a. If a significant hazard is identified
 - b. If an emergency hazard is identified
 - c. If the issue is out of scope of Awabb's law
 6. Individual circumstances
 7. Written summaries
 8. Keeping the tenant informed
 9. Securing suitable accommodation
 10. Larger issues
 11. Definitions
-

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy outlines the responsibilities cornerstone has regarding pest control. This policy sets out cornerstone's commitments based on Awabb's Law, and guidance provided based on Awaab's Law, regarding pest control and the timeframes cornerstone must adhere to when addressing reports of pests. This policy targets number 15, Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse, of the Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRs) and reports of pests will be responded to in accordance with both the HHSRs and Awaab's Law.

2. WHAT IS A PEST INFESTATION

A pest is any organism that conflicts with habitable accommodation by causing damage to property/contaminating food, spreading disease or posing a risk to health or causing nuisance.

Examples include Cockroaches, Bedbugs, Fleas, Rats, Mice and Birds.

An infestation is the presence of a large number of insects or animals that are classified as vermin in the United Kingdom.

Signs of an infestation include droppings/footprints/damage to the property/odour or discolouration. The sighting of one or two animals or insects is unlikely to be evidence of an infestation unless there are other signs that pests are present in large numbers.

3. REPORTING PESTS

Residents should report to Cornerstone as soon as there is an infestation or a potential infestation. Residents should make the extent of the problem clear as this will inform whether the issue is an emergency or significant hazard or if it does not fall under the scope of Awabb's Law. We will support residents in reporting and signposting issues to other relevant authorities, taking into account individual communication needs and reasonable adjustments.

All reports of pest infestations should be taken seriously and not dismissed, and proper procedure should be followed and recorded when addressing these hazards.

4. WHAT ARE CORNERSTONES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Cornerstone has a duty to ensure that our properties are free from Hazards and that we work alongside residents to help them take care of their homes. To do this, we will provide information and guidance to residents about how to keep their home pest-free, including details about pest control services locally.

Where there are circumstances or vulnerabilities that mean that the hazard that pests present comes under the Building Safety Act 2022, we will act to address the hazard within the relevant timeframes.

We will recharge residents for pest control services that we procure in relation to their home and address the root cause of the pests within each household where reasonable and practicable.

Our approach

Cornerstone will respond to reports of pests and infestation within the timeframes laid out below and provide respectful and hazard assessed services to residents regarding pest control.

Cornerstone may take preventative actions in areas determined as having a greater risk of infestations, for example, homes near a river, and conduct proofing works accordingly.

If the infestation is coming from a private resident, then residents should contact the local authority's environmental health department and/ or Cornerstone will support residents to do this if they choose not to do this.

5. PROCESS TO ADDRESS AND RESOLVE PEST RELATED HAZARDS

Step 1: A potential hazard is reported, or Cornerstone becomes aware of a potential hazard

- It is important accurate information is reported by the resident as soon as pests become apparent in the property. Information about the severity of the pest infestation/problem should also be reported to enable a response in a timely and appropriate manner
- Cornerstone will review information about the hazard and the resident's circumstances.
- Cornerstone will make an initial assessment to decide whether this issue is a potential 'significant' or 'emergency' hazard or if it falls outside of the scope of Awaab's law and thus Cornerstone's responsibilities

Blame for the hazard will not be placed on the resident. Whilst they may have a part to play, there are many occasions where their actions may not be the root cause and as a landlord, we will investigate this fully before deciding who is responsible.

If there is concern that a resident's actions may be contributing to a pest infestation, for example, waste in the home, the problem should be identified and support provided to the resident to resolve it. Residents should minimise the risk of infestation.

Step 2: Investigation into the hazard

- If a potentially significant hazard is identified, Cornerstone will carry out an investigation within 10 working days to identify the hazard.
- If a potential emergency hazard is identified, Cornerstone will carry out an investigation, and relevant safety work will be undertaken as soon as reasonably practicable, both within 24 hours of becoming aware of the emergency hazard.

If a Significant Hazard is identified:

Step 3: Works timeframes

- If investigations confirm a significant hazard:
 - A written summary of the investigation and its findings must be provided to the resident within 3 working days of the investigation's conclusion.

- Relevant safety works will be completed and steps taken to begin any further supplementary works to prevent hazards from reoccurring within 5 working days of concluding the investigation.
- There may be circumstances when it is not reasonably practicable to begin the relevant supplementary preventative work within 5 working days, if:
 - ♣ Specialist workers to attend the property are unable to be obtained
 - ♣ Required materials for relevant works can not be attained.
 - ♣ Required approvals, for example, from local authority building control, can not be attained. An application to the Building Safety regulator must be made as soon as reasonably practicable.
 - ♣ Necessary detailed surveys or assessments such as a fire risk assessment of structural survey are unable to be contracted.
- If the hazard is identified as an emergency, then safety works must be undertaken within 24 hours

Step 4: Alternative Accommodation

- If the property cannot be made safe, Cornerstone must offer a suitable alternative accommodation until the hazard is fully resolved

Step 5: Hazard resolved

- Once the hazard is resolved and all required safety works are completed, the obligation to provide alternative accommodation ends.

If an Emergency Hazard is identified:

Step 3: Works timeframes

- All relevant safety works, and the property made safe must be completed within 24 Hours.
- If the property cannot be made safe within 24 hours, Cornerstone must offer a suitable alternative accommodation until the hazard is fully resolved.
- A written summary of the investigation and its findings must be provided within 3 working days of the conclusion (if required). If not required, the tenant should be informed work has been completed.

Step 4: Hazard resolved

- Once the emergency hazard is resolved, and all required safety works are completed and the obligation to provide alternative accommodation ends.

If the issue is out of scope of Awabb's Law

- A report of a potential hazard will be reviewed and may be deemed outside of the scope of Awabb's Law.
- The tenant should then be informed of this decision and given a clear and recorded reason for this decision.

The timeframes set out above should act as a maximum threshold and hazards should attempt to be resolved as quickly as possible.

6. INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

When assessing the risk a potential hazard presents, the residents' individual circumstances should be considered. There are many circumstances where a resident may be at greater risk from hazardous conditions, even if the hazard is not Category Level 1 of the HHSRS. This can include, but is not limited to, age, mental health and physical health.

For example, a resident with age or health-related vulnerabilities may be at a significant risk from a home affected with pests, domestic hygiene and refuge hazards, even if this hazard is scored as a category 2 under HHSRS.

Depending on the nature of the pest hazard and circumstances of the residents, Cornerstone should prioritise addressing hazards that may warrant a quicker response within these timeframes. For example, a house with children may warrant a quicker response time.

WRITTEN SUMMARIES

The written summary provided to the residents 3 days after the conclusion of the investigation must include information on:

- whether or not the investigation identified a significant or emergency hazard and what the hazard is.
- what actions are required under Awabb's Law, what these actions are and the target timeframe for beginning and completing that action.

- if no actions are required under Awabb's law the written summary must specify that there are no actions required under the regulations and the reasons why there is no action required under the regulations.
- Advice on any issue that may be contributing to the pest infestation and support or signposting to resolve the issue.
- Information on how to contact Cornerstone.

Written summaries are intended to be a respectful and empathetic form of communication with residents. They should be transparent and beneficial to the residents and can support Cornerstone in demonstrating what actions were taken should a case go to the Housing Ombudsman or to the court. A record of this should be kept.

7. KEEPING THE RESIDENT INFORMED

It is key to keep the resident updated throughout the investigative and work period, even if it takes multiple attempts. Residents must be updated with clear communications and timescales to manage expectations.

Effective records of communications and actions taken must be kept and help inform decisions on actions to prevent repeating the same actions that are ineffective.

Cornerstone must take reasonable steps to keep the tenant informed about the timings and progress of required works until its completion unless for any reason the work is no longer required.

Work may no longer be required if any of the following are true:

- Cornerstone has exhausted all reasonable endeavours to obtain consent for the works without which it cannot be lawfully undertaken.
- An investigation concludes the home is not affected by a significant or emergency hazard.
- An investigation concludes that there is no required work in relation to the hazard in question.

8. SECURING SUITABLE ACCOMODATION

If the relevant safety works are unable to be completed within the initial remediation period (5 working days from the completion of an investigation for a significant hazard or 24 hours for an emergency hazard) then provisions of a suitable alternative accommodation, at Cornerstone's expense, must be secured until relevant safety work has been completed.

This alternative suitable accommodation can include several different stocks including vacant social housing stock, Private rented homes, hotels/B&Bs.

A risk assessment of the situation should be conducted of the situation to assess whether it is appropriate to decant the resident. This should take the resident's circumstances into account.

Accommodation provided must be suitable for the individual residents needs. This includes:

- Ensuring adequate space for the residents, including an appropriate number of bedrooms given the residents family make up.
- Location of the property in consideration of the residents workplace or schools.
- Considering disability or medical needs and ensuring accommodation is accessible.
- Length of stay in alternative accommodation, as accommodation suitable for a short period may not be suitable for a long period (For example, a hotel with a lack of facilities such as a kitchen).

Cornerstone will endeavour to minimise the amount of time residents are in alternative accommodation by completing relevant safety work as soon as reasonably practicable. Any additional costs and compensation/inconvenience payments that may be incurred by the tenant should be agreed between Cornerstone and the tenant. This may include reimbursement payments to cover transport, food costs or compensation for time off work. We will refer to our Customer Compensation Policy.

Residents may have reasons to decline being moved from their homes even if it is temporary. Cornerstone should make the risks of staying in the home clear to residents before the end of the initial remediation period. The ultimate decision as to whether residents leave their homes and move into alternative accommodation sits with the residents.

9. LARGER ISSUES

Connections between pests and disrepair should be drawn and addressed in a manner appropriate for the circumstance. Multiple reports of pests in the same block or locality must be addressed as part of a larger issue, and potential steps must be taken to resolve the issue and prevent future recurrence. A thorough investigation of the area as a whole may be conducted as a precaution to determine if there is a pattern or a larger-scale issue. There may be a relevant role for other community

organisations, for example, the local authority environmental health team, if the infestation is in wider areas.

11. DEFINITIONS

A **'significant' Hazard** is one that poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of a tenant taking into account circumstances as well as vulnerabilities of the resident and household members.

A **'significant risk of harm'** is a risk of harm to the occupier's health or safety that a reasonable lessor with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe as a matter of urgency

An **'emergency' hazard** is one that poses an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety of a tenant.

An **'imminent and significant risk of harm'** is defined as a risk of harm to the occupier's health or safety that a reasonable landlord with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe within 24 hours.