

Pest Control Policy

Board/EG Approval: August 2025 **Responsible Board:** Ocean Housing Ltd

Next Review: August 2028 **Responsible Executive:** Managing Director
Ocean Housing Ltd

1.0 Purpose and Scope

1.1 This policy explains how Ocean Housing will manage reports of pests in its rented properties and in its neighbourhoods.

2.0 Legislation

2.1 There is no specific, landlord focused legislation relating to the management of reports of pests.

3.0 Housing Ombudsman Guidance

3.1 The Housing Ombudsman guidance for landlords says:

- After a resident has reported an issue, we should undertake timely inspections of their home/impacted areas
- There should be timely repairs where required which link to our repairs policy and depending on the severity of the issue
- We should investigate a report fully before deciding who is responsible
- All reports of pest infestation should be taken seriously and not be dismissed
- If we believe a resident's actions may be contributing to a pest infestation, we should support the resident to resolve it
- We should keep residents updated while we are dealing with an issue and should be clear with communication and timescales to manage expectations
- We should keep effective records to not repeat the same actions that are not working
- We should employ expert surveyors and seek input to guide responses
- Our pest control policy should have methodological steps in establishing whether it is our responsibility or not
- We should consider whether it is appropriate to move the resident out
- We must look out for links between pests and disrepair as well as multiple reports of pests in the same block or locality
- If there are multiple reports, there should be a thorough investigation of that whole area as a precaution to ensure there is no pattern
- We should have a joined-up approach between us and a pest control company we employ – possibly a key contact.

4.0 What are pests?

4.1 The British Pest Control Association website identifies 87 pests. The Housing Ombudsman website (at July 2025) says it considers the following to be pests:

- Rats

- Mice
- Daddy long-legs
- Silver fish
- Cockroaches
- Bed bugs

- 4.2 The pests that are most commonly reported to Ocean are ants, wasps, rats, mice, flies, fleas and woodworm.
- 4.3 Pests are naturally occurring and will never be completely removed, particularly from external areas. For Ocean to act, it must be established there is a level of nuisance that requires action i.e. an infestation.
- 4.4 An infestation can be defined as the presence of an unusually large number of insects or animals in a place. One or two wasps on a communal staircase would not require a response but a swarm of wasps would. The type of pest is also relevant. For example, one rat in an internal communal area would be enough to act.
- 4.5 The location of the pest will also be relevant. Woodlice in an internal communal area might require attention while we would not act on a report of woodlice in a garden area.

5.0 Pests in communal areas

- 5.1 Ocean is responsible for dealing with pest infestations in internal and external communal areas, unless the block is managed by a third party.
- 5.2 When a pest issue that requires action is reported in a communal area, a pest control specialist will be appointed to deal with it.
- 5.3 If a building defect has contributed to the presence of the pest that will be repaired in accordance with our Responsive Repairs Policy unless the pest control specialist recommends a different timescale to allow for effective management of the pest issue.
- 5.4 The cost of pest control services carried out in communal areas will be included in the service charge and apportioned accordingly between tenants and homeowners, in line with the terms of their lease or tenancy agreement.

6.0 Pests in gardens where the tenant has exclusive use

- 6.1 If pests are found in individual gardens, garages, sheds and outbuildings, it is the responsibility of the resident to seek advice and take appropriate action to deal with the infestation. This includes rats and mice.
- 6.2 There are two potential exceptions to this. We will treat the infestation if it has arisen because of a repair issue that has been reported to us, and for which we are responsible, and we have not dealt with it.
- 6.3 An exception may also be made if the advice of a pest control specialist is that an infestation across a number of adjoining gardens can only be effectively dealt with by a co-ordinated approach and Ocean does not believe the residents will be able to achieve that. This may be particularly relevant where the condition of an Ocean rented property is identified as the source of the infestation.

- 6.4 Where appropriate, residents will be recharged the cost of the work. We will not usually include a private property in the treatment programme unless the owner or resident pays their share of the cost in advance. If Ocean determines that works are necessary but cannot secure the engagement of private properties (and payment by them) then it may determine to proceed with works and cover the cost of that element itself.

7.0 Pests in homes

- 7.1 Our response will depend on the nature of the infestation and other information provided by the tenant.
- 7.2 For the following pests we will appoint a pest control contractor to deal with the issue, recharging the tenant if there is no evidence that neglect on the part of Ocean caused the infestation, or if there is no infestation found. No recharge will be made if the tenant could not reasonably have known a repair was required e.g. something at roof level:
- a) Rats
 - b) Squirrels
 - c) Birds
 - d) Mice
 - e) Cockroaches
 - f) Termites
 - g) Woodworm
- 7.3 For all other pests, including (but not limited to) those below, we will advise the tenant it is their responsibility to deal with them:
- a) Wasps
 - b) Ants
 - c) Flies
 - d) Fleas
 - e) Wood lice
 - f) Silver fish
 - g) Daddy long-legs
 - h) Bed bugs
- 7.4 For 7.3 (a-e) if the tenant provides evidence that the infestation has arisen because of repair issue that has been reported to us, but we have not dealt with it, we will arrange and pay for the treatment of the infestation.
- 7.5 If a homeowner, including a shared owner, reports a pest infestation inside their home they will be advised it is their responsibility to deal with it.
- 7.6 If a tenant or homeowner fails to deal with an infestation that is their responsibility, and it becomes an issue for neighbours, Ocean may take on the treatment and will recharge the tenant/homeowner if it does so.
- 7.7 The Head of Customer Experience and Neighbourhood Services has delegated authority to exercise discretion on whether Ocean Housing will take responsibility for pest control and associated costs in exceptional circumstances that may not already be covered by previous guidance in this policy.

8.0 Moving home temporarily due to a pest infestation

- 8.1 If Ocean arranges pest control treatment and that treatment requires the tenants to be away from their home for a few hours they will be expected to make arrangements to do so e.g. by visiting family or friends.
- 8.2 If they are required to be away overnight and cannot stay with family or friends, we will meet the cost of alternative accommodation, usually in a budget hotel and will make a contribution to meal costs.
- 8.3 The presence of pests, and any associated treatment/repair work, does not automatically mean a tenant must be moved out temporarily. An assessment will be made based on the advice of the pest control expert, regarding the risk presented by the pest and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 assessment of the treatment product. Account will be taken of any extenuating factors presented by the tenant and health/care professionals.
- 8.4 The presence of pests, and any associated treatment, is not a ground for a permanent move and does not qualify as a management transfer.

9.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 9.1 Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity, fairness and respect. We will ensure that decisions about pest control are considered carefully and thoroughly.
- 9.2 Reasonable Adjustments, under the Equality Act 2010, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 9.3 We are committed to addressing any communication or language barriers by providing translation services for face-to-face contact and written communication when needed. We will also produce information in alternative formats such as audio or large print where required.

10.0 Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years or when new legislation or best practice guidelines are introduced.