THE BED BUG

Bed bugs pose a health risk because they feed on the blood of animals including humans and may cause infection in the person bitten. However this is very rare and apart from the stigma and unpleasant psychological factor of your home being infested with bed bugs, the main problem for humans is the discomfort caused by the bites.

There are 2 main types of bugs that feed by biting and drawing blood from specific animals, they will both however feed on other animals if their preferred host is not available. They are the Common Bed Bug (Cimex lectularius) and the Martin Bug (Oeciacus hirundinis). The latter normally live in birds’ nests and do not generally bite humans. Bed bugs on the other hand are human parasites that live and breed in peoples homes and feed largely during the night on human blood. During the hours of daylight they inhabit cracks and crevices in walls, furniture and wallpaper seams. Adults are reddish-brown in colour, about 6 mm in length and have a rather flattish body. They grow in size by up to six times normal after a blood meal and will become a rich mahogany colour when engorged with blood. Despite feeding entirely on blood, they can lay dormant and survive for six months between feeds. They breed by laying eggs, which usually hatch after about 10 -20 days. The bugs then grow through a series of stages, each one of which they need to feed on blood in order to develop further, until they become adults after about 9-18 weeks. Whilst bed bugs are not often noticed during daylight hours, an unpleasant almond smell, the presence of faecal spotting and occasional blood staining on bedding are often tell-tail signs of an infestation.

The Service Provided

The Council carries out Bed bug Treatments in both Domestic and Commercial properties. However the Council is not legally obliged to provide this service and therefore has to make a charge to its customers.

The treatment consists of spraying a long lasting insecticide onto surfaces where the bed bugs crawl. The insecticide works rapidly and kills most insects on contact. The insecticide will continue to work for up to 2 months and so you should not clean it off until after all the bed bugs are destroyed. It is recommended that you hot wash and tumble dry bedding and clothing and vacuum all carpets before the treatment, and avoid vacuuming again for at least 2 weeks. You will usually notice a reduction in the number of bed bugs within 2-3 days but it may take longer to kill off all the insects, as the eggs will continue to hatch after the treatment has been carried out. This is why a long lasting insecticide is used. The treatment is very effective, however because of the bed bug life cycle and ability to hide away in between feeds, there are occasions when it does not fully work. Should there still be evidence of a live bed bug infestation 4 weeks after the final treatment; the Council will provide a follow-up treatment free of charge.

Safety Information

The insecticides used by the Council are the safest available and do not pose any risk to people or pets with the exception of fish, which have similar body structures to insects and may be affected. Should you use the service you will also be given an information sheet on the insecticide used by the pest controller which provides further information.

Contacting the Service

Treatments can be requested by contacting the Pest Control Service. You can also request a service by completing the online form.