



South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust &
Torbay and Southern Devon Health and Care NHS Trust

PEST CONTROL POLICY

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Date of Issue:	September 2014	Next Review Date:	November 2017
Version:	Final Version	Last Review Date:	April 2010
Author:	Karen Robertson, Head of Facilities		
Directorate:	Estates & Facilities Management		
Approval Route			
Approved By:		Date Approved:	
Environment Group		26 November 2014	
Infection Control Committee		15 January 2015	
Links or overlaps with other policies:			

Amendment History

Issue	Status	Date	Reason for Change	Authorised
	Draft	September 2014	Refresh of Policy Format	Environment Group

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1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Torbay and Southern Devon NHS & Care Trust (the Trusts) recognise their common law duty of care, as well as the legal duties as an employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and all relevant associated pieces of health and safety legislation, to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees, patients and other people including contracted workers.
- 1.2 The Trusts will adopt the same approach to all health and safety matters by assessing and reducing risks generically where possible and creating systems to localise procedures and working practices as necessary to ensure as far as possible the safety of employees, patients and other people.
- 1.3 The Trusts will provide information, instruction and training to staff and will monitor incidents and near misses to provide positive learning's and reduce the risk of reoccurrence. The Trust will also provide information and instructions to patients, contractors and visitors to ensure their safety as far as possible and the safety of staff when working with patients and visitors.

2 Purpose/Introduction

- 2.1 The presence of pests can be offensive, present infection hazards, contaminate foodstuffs, damage materials and structure or be a nuisance. Once established, pests can be difficult and costly to deal with. Satisfactory standards of pest control in clinical and non- clinical areas are an integral part of providing an optimum environment for the delivery of good quality patient care and minimise the risk of Health Care Associated Infections (HCAI).
- 2.2 The Trusts are committed to meeting their obligations under the "Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice for health and adult social care on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance", by ensuring that procedures are in place to prevent the risk of pest infestation in all food storage, distribution and catering areas and to ensure high standards of pest control in all other areas to minimise the risk of HCAI.
- 2.3 The 'environment' is defined as the totality of a service user's surroundings when in care premises. This includes the fabric of the building, and related fixtures, and fittings and services such as air and water supplies.
- 2.3 The terms "rid" and "riddance" when used in the context of pest control are defined as eradication or achieving the best level of control that is technically and practicably possible.

3 Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 The Trust is committed to preventing discrimination, valuing diversity and achieving equality of opportunity. No employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or on the grounds of trade union membership.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is the duty holder and has overall accountability for the provision of a safe healthcare environment.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that each organisation has systems and processes in place to implement this policy and that the policy is reviewed at least every three years.

4.2 Director of Estates and Commercial Development

The Director of Estates and Commercial Development has the overall responsibility for:

- the management, implementation and monitoring of this policy;
- ensuring that adequate resources, including appropriate training for the role of Authorised Officer to be effectively undertaken, are available within the Trust for the implementation of this policy;

4.3 Head of Facilities

The Head of Facilities is responsible for:

- Strategic and operational development of pest control services;
- Identifying funding requirements and preparation of bids;
- Ensuring high standards of service provision and value for money are maintained;

4.4 Facilities Managers

A Facilities Manager will be identified as Authorised Officer in respect of the Pest Control contract for each site.

The Facilities Manager will be responsible for monitoring the performance of the Pest Control Contractor to ensure that the contract specifications and standards are being met and that the Trust is receiving an effective service.

The Facilities Manager will:

- Develop the specification for pest control services;
- Undertake the procurement of the pest control contract, making recommendations to the Head of Facilities for contract award to suitably qualified contractor(s);
- Monitor to ensure that the contractor achieves its contractual obligations
- Ensure that the contractual arrangements deliver high standards of pest control and value for money;

4.5 Facilities Supervisors

The Supervisor will:

Receive, investigate and initiate appropriate action on all reports of the evidence of pests or sightings of pests.

Assess the Contractor's written reports and to note:

- Action taken to combat pest infestation since the Contractor's last report;
- An assessment of the current situation, including any works required to be done to eliminate harbourage and improve hygiene;
- Any proposals for further action by the Contractor;
- Safety measures to prevent anti pest devices/traps or compounds causing harm to patients, visitors or staff.

Act as the main link between Trust staff and the Pest Contractor in respect of pest control issues.

Provide technical advice in respect of local requirements during the preparation of the pest control contract specifications and adjudication of tenders.

Liaise with the Pest Control Contractor, Environmental Health Officer of the relevant local authority and appropriate personnel within the Trust on matters relating to pest control.

Disseminate information and implement pest awareness training within the Trusts, calling on advice from specialist sources when necessary.

4.6 Trust Employees

All Trust employees are responsible for adherence to this policy and in particular for reporting evidence or sightings of pests at the earliest opportunity.

4.7 Pest Control Contractor

The nominated pest control contractor will adopt procedures to prevent Trust owned and leased premises becoming infested.

The contractor will carry out pro-active work to monitor for evidence of pests and take corrective actions as necessary in order to keep Trust premises free from pests. The contractor will undertake a minimum of eight routine visits (of which at least one visit will be at night), per annum.

The nominated contractor will carry out the work under the contract normally between the hours of 08:30 to 17:00 Monday to Friday inclusive, excluding public holidays except where emergency treatment is required or where operational requirements dictate otherwise. In such circumstances, the Authorised Officer shall advise the Contractor accordingly. Night visits will be by arrangement.

All pesticides used by the Trusts' pest control contractor will be approved in accordance with The Control of Pesticides Regulations (COPR) 1986 (as amended 1997), be strictly controlled and monitored and fully comply with the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002.

5 Procedures

5.1 Basic Pest Control Measures

In order to reduce the risk of pest infestations all staff should be aware of and adopt the following basic control measures:

- Food should be covered or stored in pest proof containers.

- Spillages should be promptly removed.
- Waste should be stored in a manner suitable to prevent access by pests
- Accumulation of static/stagnant water should be avoided.
- Buildings should be of sound structure and well maintained, drains should be covered, leaking pipe work repaired and damaged surfaces made good.
- Defects should be reported to the Estates Department.
- Cracks in plaster and woodwork, unsealed areas around pipe work, damaged tiles, badly fitted equipment and kitchen units are all likely to provide excellent harbourage and should be maintained in a suitable condition.
- Fly screens, where fitted, should always be closed when windows are open.
- Doors to food preparation areas should be kept closed.
- Treatment with insecticides and rodenticides alone is seldom sufficient and attention must be paid to good hygiene and structural maintenance.

5.2 Reporting Procedure

All sightings of pests or evidence of their existence should be reported in the first instance to:

Torbay Hospital: the Facilities Department Helpdesk (extension 55331) at the earliest opportunity.

Community Hospital sites: the Lead Hospital Administrator at the earliest opportunity.

The information required will include:

- the location, i.e. ward, department, clinic, etc
- precise location, i.e. bathroom, office, etc
- the type of pest if known – information on common pests and their control is contained in Appendix A.
- possible numbers and the frequency of sighting
- the name of the person reporting
- the date and time of the sighting

In the event that a satisfactory response is not received within 24 hours of the time of reporting the Authorised Officer should be contacted.

Action taken by the contractor following a notification will be recorded in the maintenance log book held on site.

5.3 Pest Control Contract

The Trusts will ensure that an appropriate pest control contract is in operation at all times. The pest control contract will be monitored by the Authorised Officer against a pest control contract specification.

5.4 Visiting Pets

In principle pets should not be brought into healthcare settings, except for guide dogs/canine helpers or as part of the national Pet Therapy scheme. However, there may be occasions when a visiting pet is beneficial to a particular in-patient and under these exceptional circumstances agreement must be sought from the

infection prevention and control team, matron or out of hours the manager on call and a risk assessment should be carried out.

5.5 Guide Dogs/Canine Helpers

In most cases there is no restricted access for guide dogs/canine helpers but a common sense approach should be adopted to meet the needs of the owner and maintain a clean and safe environment.

5.6 Pet Therapy

The importance of Pets as Therapy within the rehabilitation setting is acknowledged, however it is important that agreement must be sought from the infection prevention and control team, matron or out of hours the manager on call and a risk assessment should be carried out. The following guidelines must be adhered to at all times:

- The visiting dog must be approved as part of the Pets as Therapy scheme. This ensures the dog has been passed as fit by a vet, has received all necessary vaccinations and is appropriately trained.
- A member of staff should be designated as the responsible person for the duration of the visit.
- Staff must ensure that there are no patients or staff in the setting who suffer from a dog allergy.
- Patients with open wounds and alert organisms should not pet the animals
- Staff should feel assured the dog is healthy at the time of the visit, is on a leash and is under control.
- The dog should be taken to a designated area and not allowed in any food preparation area or clinical rooms. The day room should be used for visiting in patient areas.
- The dog can only be fed and watered outside the building.
- If the dog vomits, urinates or defecates, the responsible person should ensure that this is appropriately removed and the area cleaned thoroughly with detergent and water. Personal protective clothing should be worn, disposable paper roll/cloths used and disposed of correctly.
- All persons in contact with the dog must ensure they wash their hands using soap and water after contact.
- The room where the dog has visited should undergo its normal daily clean.

6 References

- Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice for health and adult social care on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance
- The Control of Pesticides Regulations (COPR) 1986 (as amended 1997)
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994
- Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996

7 Contact Details

Torbay Hospital

Facilities Helpdesk – extension 55331

Facilities Supervisor on Duty – Bleep 65-313

Facilities Managers Office – extensions 54443, 56859, 54364

Community Trust sites

Contact the Lead Hospital Administrator in the first instance

8 Monitoring, Audit and Review Procedures

This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if research, evidence or a change in practice or legislation requires a review to be undertaken. The review will include:

- The extent to which objectives and aims are being met.
- Advice on how the policy should be amended to reflect new legislation, changes in conditions and information.

9 Appendix 1 – *Information on common pests*

9.1 House Flies

Significance

Houseflies can transmit intestinal worms or their eggs and are potential vectors of disease such as dysentery, gastro-enteritis, typhoid, cholera and tuberculosis. They will frequent and feed indiscriminately on any liquefiable solid food, putrefying material or food stored for human consumption.

Control

Flies have rapid, prolific breeding habits and high mobility. In order to break the life-cycle, control measures should be directed against larval and adult flies.

Hygiene/Management

Satisfactory hygiene is necessary to limit potential breeding sites and food sources. Entry of flies into buildings can be prevented by 1.12mm mesh fly screen, air curtains, bead screens or self-closing door equipment with rubber seals.

9.2 Cockroaches

Distribution

Cockroaches are common in premises associated with the production or handling of food. Gregarious and nocturnal they spend the day hiding in cracks and crevices around areas such as sinks, drains, cookers, the backs of cupboards and in refrigerator motor compartments. They favour buildings with service ducts and complex plumbing installations which allow them to travel freely.

Significance

Cockroaches are potential vectors of diseases such as dysentery, gastroenteritis, typhoid and poliomyelitis. Their diet is omnivorous and includes fermenting substances, soiled dressings, hair, leather, parchment, wallpaper, faeces and food for human consumption. The latter may be contaminated either by the mechanical transfer of causative agents of disease from the insect's body, or by transmission in the faeces.

Control

Monitoring and control is essential although successful control of cockroaches is a complex subject, and depends very much upon tailoring control measures to the species concerned. Infestations can be difficult to control as cockroach eggs are poorly penetrated by insecticides. Consequently surveillance of the area by the pest control contractor may need to be prolonged.

Hygiene/management

A high standard of hygiene will deny sources of food and hiding places.

9.3 Ants

Black Ants

Foraging worker ants cause a nuisance as they travel widely in search of food, following well-defined trails and clustering around the food source. Sweet foods are preferred. They are obviously an unpleasant sight and may damage food for human consumption.

Pharaoh's Ants

These 2mm omnivorous light brown ants are half the size of the black ants. They cannot breed without artificial heat, are very persistent and pose a serious cross infection risk in hospitals. The ants may be found in wall cavities, heating pipes, behind sinks and ovens and therefore in laundry, linen rooms, clinical and residential areas.

Hygiene/management

Although frequently inaccessible and difficult to destroy, ant's nests must be eradicated. If infestation is to be successfully controlled, hormone treatment is required which sterilises the female ant.

9.4 Wasps

Wasp stings cause pain and distress. Some individuals are particularly sensitive. Wasp nests are only used for one season, so it may be possible to put up with the problem temporarily. They are often found in cavities in brickwork, in air bricks and roof vents. The nest can be treated by the Trust's pest control contractor; such work may be best carried out in the evening or weekend as poisoned stupefied wasps can cause problems. Particular attention should be paid to areas around rubbish bins that should be kept in a hygienic condition.

9.5 Other Insect Pests

There are many other insect pests that occur sporadically in hospitals. The most common of these being flies of various species, crickets, silverfish and the stored product insects and mites which can be found infesting dried foods such as flour weevils.

9.6 Mice and Rats

These are the vertebrates with greatest potential for damage to food stocks and building fabric in hospitals. Modern rodenticides are extremely efficient in the eradication of mice and rats from hospitals. The Trust will notify the relevant local authority of any infestation of its land or buildings by rats and mice in "substantial numbers" as required by the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949. Rodents have been known to gnaw through electric cables and cause fires. All sightings and other evidence of their presence should be reported to the Authorised Officer. The Trust will take reasonable steps to ensure that its buildings are rodent proofed by, for example, fitting collars where pipes pass through walls and by filling gaps in the building fabric, etc. All food and organic waste shall be kept in rodent proof containers.

9.7 Bats

Bats are protected by the The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The penalties for contravention are severe. If bats are discovered in any of the Trust's buildings or on any of its land they must not under any circumstances be killed, expelled, stopped from gaining access, touched or disturbed. Contractors must be prevented from doing work anywhere near them. English Nature should be contacted for advice.

9.8 Birds

The nuisance of birds can be controlled in the first instance by preventative measures, e.g. blocking of nesting holes and the application of devices to discourage perching. Netting and trapping can also be considered with the aim of immediate release away from the area/location of capture. As a last resort birds may be culled by shooting with the approval of the Trust Chief Executive and local police authority. No attempt should be made to poison them. Whichever method is employed it should take into account whether the birds are currently in a nesting season or whether they are protected by law. Advice should be sought from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

9.9 Squirrels

The most serious damage in urban areas arises where the squirrel enters the roof spaces of buildings by climbing the walls or jumping from nearby trees. Once inside, they chew woodwork, ceilings, insulation on electrical wiring or tear up the loft insulation to form a nest. The best method of control is to proof the building/loft. Prevention is better than cure. If a cure is required the best form of control is trapping with the use of a squirrel trap.

9.10 Foxes

Foxes in this country may occasionally spread disease such as toxocara and leptospirosis but the risk is believed to be small. More significantly foxes do cause nuisance in a number of ways. During the mating season the noise of barks and blood-curdling screams proliferate and in addition to the feeding habits described above there is damage to grounds and gardens caused when digging for food and of course the indiscriminate depositing of faeces. Killing foxes in urban areas is both unnecessary and unlikely to provide a long-term solution as other foxes move in to vacant territories.

9.11 Badgers

Badgers in this country may occasionally spread disease but the risk is believed to be small. More significantly Badgers do cause nuisance in a number of ways. Their feeding habits cause damage to grounds and gardens caused when digging. Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations 1994. The penalties for contravention are severe. If badgers are discovered on any of the Trust's land they must not under any circumstances be killed, expelled, stopped from gaining access, touched or disturbed. Contractors must be prevented from doing work anywhere near them. English Nature should be contacted for advice.

9.12 Rabbits

Rabbits can cause great damage by burrowing under buildings and putting at risk the foundations of buildings, however there are strict guidelines on their removal so please contact the authorised officer for advice. This also applies to any suspected myxomatosis cases.

9.13 Moles

Moles are a widespread species and are not protected by conservation legislation, with basic protection from cruelty under the Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996.

The mole is a common British mammal and, although not often seen, the results of its tunnelling are well known and may cause damage in a range of situations. In gardens and amenity areas, molehills and tunnels can be a nuisance. In agriculture, contamination of grass by soil may lead to poor quality silage being produced. There is also a risk of damaging grass-cutting machinery. Mole runs may disturb roots and adversely affect plant growth. Before carrying out any mole control, it is important to consider if such action is warranted or if the molehills and tunnels can be tolerated. Where control measures can be justified, there are two main methods, trapping or poisoning with aluminium phosphide. Please note that strychnine hydrochloride can no longer be legally purchased or used for mole control in the UK.

9.14 Deer

Since October 2007, all wild deer with the exception of Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) are protected by a close season.

The best long-term solution to reduce the damage caused by deer is to achieve an adequate cull each year and so reduce the local deer population. This is best achieved through a wider, co-coordinated cull undertaken by a local Deer Management Group rather than on an ad-hoc basis by individuals. However, legislation makes provisions for actions that can be taken in exceptional circumstances where problems cannot readily be resolved through normal deer management.