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"Rats on a Scholar's Desk" by Nagasawa Rosetsu, 1790.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, public domain.



PROFESSIONAL PEST CONTROLLER DECEMBER 2025
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Online CPD quiz = 1 point each

Remember to log anything else you've learned in your CPD diary for even more points. **bPCA.org.uk/add**



Basis Prompt point allocation

Reading PPC mag = 2 points
Online CPD quiz = 1 point each
bPCA.org.uk/find-cpd

EDITORIAL

Risk is part of the strategy

BPCA has always been bold when it comes to doing what's right for the pest management sector. We've never been afraid to take a calculated risk if it means moving the profession forward.

From introducing mandatory CPD and Level 2 qualifications, to opening our first social media accounts (when talking to the public was seen as risky business), to appearing on national TV, our Association has always been willing to step up and lead the way.

The road ahead is much the same. Transitioning more qualifications to Ofqual-regulated status, rather than BPCA-accredited, means putting our non-subscription income on the line. Moving entry-level pest qualifications up to Level 3 carries risk too.

Launching a public-facing recruitment campaign, complete with a new website and promotional film, also means inviting fresh eyes into our world - and that can be daunting.

But look at what happens when we do take those leaps. Becoming the only approved TrustMark Scheme Operator for pest management wasn't easy. It meant exposing our standards to external scrutiny and committing to a higher level of accountability. Yet now, all Servicing members meet the BS EN 16636 Standard and are part of the only government-endorsed quality scheme for tradespeople. That's a huge win for professionalism and recognition.

Our advocacy work also carries risk, but it's vital. Submitting evidence to HSE to protect anticoagulants, writing to the Chancellor ahead of the winter budget, engaging with NatureScot, Defra and others... these are bold moves that keep pest management on the agenda where it matters most. Our Manifesto for pest management is a clear signal of intent: we're not waiting to be invited into the conversation; we're making sure we're already in the room.

Next year, you'll see us take more strategic risks. We'll deliver CPD in new formats, try fresh ways to boost member participation, and explore different approaches to our events and publications.

Our Special Interest Groups and Committees will be encouraged to produce more guidance and resources. We'll partner with more organisations, bring in more expertise, and continue shining a light on members who innovate, whether through environmental responsibility, technology or training.

With risk comes potential reward. That's why we'll keep challenging ourselves to push boundaries, try new things, and tell our story to the public in bolder ways. We're not here to stand still or tag along. We're here to lead the professionalism of the sector and make a real difference.

Thanks for standing with us.

Scott + Kat

PPC editors
hello@bPCA.org.uk

TYRO GROUP EXPANDS TO THE USA WITH ACQUISITION OF ENVIROSMART

Tyro Group is proud to announce the acquisition of EnviroSMART Multifamily Pest Solutions, a leading environmental and pest control provider based in the United States.

This marks a major milestone for Tyro Group as its first acquisition outside of Europe, signalling the company's expansion into the U.S. market and reinforcing its commitment to building a group of carefully selected, high-performing, customer-focused pest control businesses.

Founded in 2009, EnviroSMART has earned a strong reputation for its dedication to delivering exceptional service to multifamily property customers across Texas.

The partnership will enable EnviroSMART to leverage Tyro Group's network-wide support, operational expertise, and investment capabilities to enhance its growth and service offerings throughout the United States.

This acquisition strengthens Tyro Group's mission to unite leading pest control companies under one collaborative banner, driving innovation, quality, and customer service excellence.

The Aust Group acted as the exclusive advisor to EnviroSmart on the transaction.

"Joining Tyro Group provides an incredible opportunity for EnviroSMART to continue growing while maintaining our focus on delivering high-quality pest management," said John Weigel Founder of EnviroSMART.

"We're excited to be part of a global group that shares our passion for service excellence."



PESTWORLD 2025 BREAKS ALL RECORDS

Pest management professionals from across the world came together in record numbers for PestWorld 2025.

More than 4,500 delegates converged on the Marriott Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida between 21-24 October, for what is the global pest management industry's biggest conference, exhibition and educational event.

That's some 12% more than 2024; itself a record attendance year.

Delegates are drawn to this annual event, organised by the USA's National Pest Management Association (NPMA), for the opportunity to meet fellow pest professionals, to exchange knowledge, gain fresh insights into emerging business trends and to stay abreast of the latest technical research.

Among the 4,500 delegates were 638 international attendees from 75 countries, underlining the global nature of today's pest management business.

The exhibition is always at the heart of PestWorld events and with 256 exhibitors, visitors had plenty to interest them. As well as the core exhibitors from the US there were also many exhibitors from Europe, South America and Asia.

Next year's PestWorld will be in Grapevine, Texas from October 20-23, 2026.

CRRU-UK CPD DEADLINE APPROACHES: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW IF YOU'RE ON BPCA REGISTERED

As we're sure you're aware, from 1 January 2026, proof of competence rules for buying professional-use rodenticides are changing.

If you wish to continue purchasing and using these products, you'll need to ensure that your training and CPD are up to date by the end of 2025.

Under the new requirements, sellers of professional-use rodenticides will only accept one of two proofs of competence:

- A CRRU UK-approved training course completed within the past five years
- A CRRU UK-approved training course completed more than five years ago, plus current membership of a CRRU-approved CPD scheme (like BPCA Registered) AND three points of CRRU UK-approved CPD.

If you're on BPCA Registered, you can take your

three points of CRRU-UK-approved CPD from any training provider.

If you've already attended approved events or sessions this year, those points will have been automatically added to your record.

If you haven't yet gained your three CRRU-approved CPD points, BPCA has added three one-hour CRRU-UK-approved online sessions to your learning account bpcareg.org.uk/me (log in required).

They're free, cover all the required material, and ensure you'll be ready to continue purchasing rodenticides in 2026.

Karen Dawes, BPCA Training and Development Manager, said:

"Getting your CRRU CPD points sorted couldn't be simpler if you're on BPCA Registered.

"The three free sessions in your online account tick every box, so you don't need to worry about hunting around for training.

"Complete them in 2025 and you'll be fully prepared for the changes in 2026."

Full details regarding professional-use rodenticide purchases can be found on the Think Wildlife website.



BPCA MOURNS THE PASSING OF FORMER CEO OLIVER MADGE

It is with deep sadness that the British Pest Control Association (BPCA) announces the passing of Oliver Madge, who for many years was a leading force in our industry and a key figure in advancing pest control standards across the UK.

Oliver's contributions to BPCA, and indeed the broader pest management profession, were profound.

He served as Chief Executive Officer of BPCA from April 2006 to November 2009, a period

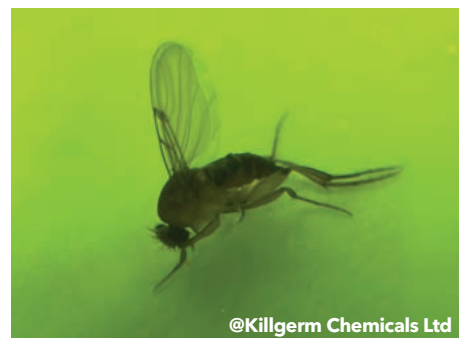
during which he championed professionalism, rigorous standards, and stronger engagement with government and regulatory bodies.

BPCA's Chair of the Outreach and Communication Committee, Alex Wade, said:

"Regardless of how you may have known him, to me, Oli was more than a colleague or business partner; he was first and foremost a good friend. He was always there with a smile to talk shop or just chat, to put the world to rights, or just to listen."

"He will be missed... I will miss him."

To his family, friends, and all those in the pest management world who worked with him, we extend our deepest condolences.



@Killgerm Chemicals Ltd

Correction: Know your enemy: the key to tiny fly control

In PPC120, we incorrectly captioned an image as Sciaridae (fungus gnat). It should have been labelled as Phoridae. This has now been updated online, and we apologise for the mix-up.



NEW CODES OF BEST PRACTICE FOR WORKING ANIMALS IN PEST MANAGEMENT PUBLISHED

BPCA has released two new Codes of Best Practice (CoBPs): 'Birds of Prey in Pest Management' and 'Working Dogs in Pest Management'.

A BPCA Code is a set of written rules which explains how people working in our industry should behave in a particular situation. Members must abide by the Codes of Best Practice in their day-to-day work.

The new Codes cover everything from animal welfare to legal compliance, ensuring pest professionals who use working animals in their control programmes meet the highest standards.

The Birds of Prey in Pest Management Code includes:

- Welfare standards that go beyond the minimum required by law, covering nutrition, housing, training, and veterinary care
- Record-keeping requirements for food sourcing, veterinary details, transportation protocols, and daily health checks
- Clear guidance on training methods, equipment checks, and transport to ensure birds are safe and well cared for.

The Working Dogs in Pest Management Code includes:

- Minimum criteria for humane, lawful use of dogs in dispatch, wildlife tracking, detection, and public health protection
- Guidance on survey and pre-treatment checks, including assessing risks and avoiding disturbance to non-target species
- Strict welfare rules around training, fitness, humane dispatch, and safe working practices.

Niall Gallagher, BPCA Technical and Compliance Manager, said: "Working animals remain an important part of many pest management programmes. These Codes of Best Practice ensure their use is professional, ethical and fully compliant with the law.

"They set out clear expectations for BPCA members, giving clients confidence that welfare and safety always come first."

Codes of Best Practice are developed by BPCA Committees and Special Interest Groups.

DOWNLOAD CODES NOW

You can download the Codes of Best Practice here: bpca.org.uk/codes

PEST-AWARE: TRADE BODIES JOIN FORCES FOR MAINTENANCE WEEK

National trade bodies British Pest Control Association (BPCA) and Property Care Association (PCA) have joined forces to shine a spotlight on the entry points shared by water and pests as part of Maintenance Week.

The annual campaign by the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) encourages householders to undertake basic maintenance each year.

To support the campaign, the two trade bodies have shared ten top tips to help householders block common entry routes for water and pests.

BPCA and PCA's combined top tips are:

Check the chimney: flashing where the roof and stack meet should be properly sealed. Any inactive bird nests in chimney pots or flues should be removed.

Scan the roof: repair any slipped or cracked tiles and plug any major gaps on the roof or under the eaves and soffits.

Clean the gutters: remove moss, leaves and debris. Consider fitting leaf guards to prevent blockages and pests such as rats or mice accessing pipework.

Cover drains: install or repair gulley grids to prevent debris and pests getting into or out of the drainage system.

Pointing and rendering: fix damaged, loose or eroded pointing and rendering. Gaps around cable or pipe entry points should be filled with cement or covered with a metal plate to prevent pests.

Gaps around windows and doors: Faults in the seal between frames and masonry can create a channel where rain can enter. Some gaps are large enough for rodents to get in.

Water storage containers: Securely fitted lids will prevent overspill and avoid open containers becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes or a water source for rodents.

Ventilation: fans and air management systems are key to tackling condensation, damp and mould. Ducts should be in good repair with no access points for pests.

Watch the woodwork: A good wood finish protects external timber from water and frost, while internal timbers (like in lofts) should be checked for pest activity, as rats and mice gnaw to maintain their teeth.

Drives and paths: Clear leaves trim back hedges and undergrowth on drives and paths to allow surface water run-off and prevent shelter for rats and mice into the home.

More details about the Property Care Association and the work of its members can be found at property-care.org

PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE WILL FACE SIGNIFICANT SHORTAGES WITHOUT ACTION, NEW REPORT WARNS

The Royal Society for Public Health has published new research

showing that up to 20% of the wider public health workforce could leave their jobs in the next five years.

It warns that professions like pest control, food safety, and environmental health (water safety, waste management, air pollution) are facing a range of recruitment and retention challenges. It argues that these could pose significant threats to the health of the public if left unaddressed.

In the report (Untapped Potential), RSPH calls for greater recognition of the impact that the 1.5 million people in the 'wider public health workforce' make to the nation's health, arguing that these staff are critical but often overlooked and could play a part in solving the UK's many health challenges.

The report also makes the case that the Government's ambition to shift from 'hospital to community', outlined in the recently published 10 Year Health Plan for England, won't be possible without a wealth of people outside of the NHS working to keep people healthy and well.

The report argues that the NHS Workforce Strategy should be widened to include everyone who has an impact on health outcomes with a particular focus on the wider public health workforce.

The publication of the report came during Public Health Workforce Week (6-10 October), an annual celebration of the contributions that various professions make to keeping the public healthy and preventing illness.

Nick Harding, Chair, Royal Society for Public Health, said:

"At a time when our national health is facing greater challenges than ever, we need to harness the power of these motivated workers in the wider public health workforce to improve people's lives.

"What we need now is for the Government to pick up where we and others across the sector reach our limits. Proper workforce planning, meaningful monitoring of the state of the workforce, and investment in vital training are the minimum that should be on offer.

"If we want to make the shift to a preventative healthcare system, we need a commitment to implement these changes immediately."

"Wider public health workers are critical but often overlooked."



BPCA REPRESENTS THE PROFESSIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT SECTOR AT NATIONAL SUMMIT

BPCA Technical and Compliance Manager, Niall Gallagher, attended the People and Gulls Summit in Inverness on 23 September 2025, helping to represent the professional pest management sector in discussions about managing urban gull populations across Scotland.

Hosted by NatureScot, the event brought together local authorities, government representatives, conservationists, pest professionals, and community organisations to share real-world experiences, identify policy gaps, and plan practical action before the next nesting season.

The Minister opened the summit by recognising the significant impact of urban gull populations on communities, businesses, and public services across Scotland.

Delegates were clear that while gulls are a natural part of our environment, their growing presence in towns and cities presents public health, safety, and environmental challenges that demand coordinated solutions.

Niall said:

"It's encouraging to see pest management recognised as an important part of the solution. We can play a key role in turning policy into practical action, especially when it comes to humane deterrence, proofing, and working with communities to prevent problems before they start."

The overarching message from the summit was clear: managing gulls successfully will take joined-up thinking, shared accountability, and long-term investment. Short-term fixes are unlikely to solve the issue. Instead, Scotland's pest management community, local authorities, and national agencies must continue working side by side to balance the needs of people and wildlife.

BPCA will continue to engage with NatureScot and the Scottish Government to ensure professional pest management expertise remains central to future gull management strategy development.



NEW MEMBERS



Servicing members:

- Best One Services
- DC Specialist Services
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Essex Pest Proof
- Ever Brite Pest Control Ltd
- LBS Pest & Wildlife Solutions
- My World Pest Control Ltd
- Pest Assured Ltd
- PestBGone
- PyroFox Ltd
- Taylor Home Services Ltd
- ThermoPest Bed Bug Treatment London
- Vermax Environmental
- Verus Environmental Ltd
- Waveney Pest Control

Observer members:

- Accurate Pest Control Services LLC
- Genlinx Limited

Manufacturing and distributors:

- Nordisk Innovation Ltd

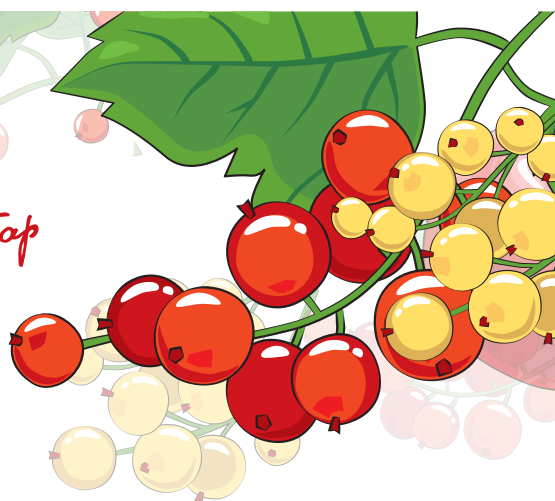


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PESTS IN THE PRESS: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2025

As always, wasps were a recurring theme over the summer, with BPCA's press release 'A strong summer for wasps' featuring in print and digital publications as well as across the regional news network.

With coverage on ITV Central Midlands East and West, Yorkshire Belmont and Emley Moor, Tyne Tees, Anglia East and West, Meridian East, Thames Valley and South Coast, West and West Country Region, in August, wasps certainly played a key role in getting BPCA's name broadcast across the nation!

In July, a previous press release about pigeons re-surfaced in around 60 regional news websites, following the return of the 'Are you allowed to punch a seagull if it tries to steal your food?' story which seems to be a favourite re-run for local newspapers.

Flying ants and the June articles on Tapinoma Magnum did spill over into July, with major news platforms including the Daily Mail and Thisismoney.co.uk running the story.

A flurry of media enquiries and coverage came about in late July, when LadBible was among the first to publish a photograph of a 22-inch rat caught by pest controllers at a property in North Yorkshire.

A BPCA press release about raccoons being featured in the Top 20 species most likely to become invasive in Britain over the next 10 years also garnered

some coverage in local and regional press.

And the media enquiries kept coming in, this time in the form of reader questions from national newspapers with a focus on pests.

As August drew to a close, BPCA was approached by the Climate Editor for the BBC and reached out to members via social media for potential filming opportunities for a story about rat populations and any correlation to a warming climate, with a view to exploring rat control methods such as dogs, tracking dust and cameras.

BPCA also worked with sector-specific titles to highlight the importance of professional pest management to decision-makers in the public and private sectors.

A story based on a survey of pest sightings in hospitals by UNISON from earlier in the year formed the basis of an exclusive article for Tomorrow's Cleaning in July and in August, we approached the team at the Society of Food Hygiene & Technology, creating a bespoke article for the Back to Basics autumn edition of their magazine SOFHT Focus, detailing the fundamental principles of professional pest management, the importance of being pest aware and offering insight into SPIs.

Looking ahead, carpet beetles, Canada geese

and wood mice are all on the agenda for press and PR, with plans to also work with titles in Facilities Management and Farming as we move towards the end of the year.

TOP 3 HEADLINES

RAT THE SIZE OF A DOG FOUND IN HOME, THE TIMES

BOFFINS WANT US TO 'HUG-A-WASP' AS LEGIONS OF THEM STING THEIR WAY ACROSS BRITAIN, DAILY STAR

RACCOONS COULD BECOME UKS NEXT INVASIVE PEST THREAT, WALES ONLINE

TOTAL ARTICLES 2025 3,543

TOTAL CIRCULATION 2025 802,892,964

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PESTS IN POLITICS: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2025

► BPCA challenges failings in glue trap legislation

BPCA has stepped up its campaign to fix the Glue Traps (Offences) Act 2022 after undercover footage showed retailers still selling and advising on the illegal use of glue traps.

On 3 August 2025, Humane World for Animals UK released its findings: 42% of independent DIY and hardware stores visited were still selling glue traps to the public.

Not a single retailer warned that using glue traps without a licence is illegal.

Worse still, some advised customers to drown live animals or throw them away in bins while still alive – both offences under the Animal Welfare Act.

The investigation also shone a light on continued risks to non-target species. Hedgehogs, wild birds and even pets are still being caught by these devices.

BPCA supported the investigation and was name-checked in the report, which stated that “the legal loophole made a mockery of the licensing scheme for professional pest controllers.”

Talking to Defra

Earlier this year, BPCA wrote to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, calling for:

- A full ban on the sale of glue traps to the public
- An immediate awareness campaign
- Stronger enforcement of the law
- Improvements to the licensing scheme for professionals
- Reduced costs and barriers for legitimate pest control work.

We received a reply from Baroness Hayman, the Defra Minister responsible for biosecurity and animal welfare, and have had further discussions with her following this latest report.

The department has said it may review the scheme if presented with evidence of serious public health impacts or if applications are rejected in genuine high-risk cases.

Our position is clear: evidence of failure is already in plain sight. We’ve offered to arrange a roundtable with officials and members working in schools, hospitals and food factories, to show what the current approach means in practice.

We’ll keep pushing for a total ban on sales, fair and affordable licensing for trained professionals, and tougher enforcement. Members encountering illegal sales or use of glue traps should report them to their local authority and copy BPCA at policy@bpca.org.uk.

“Glue trap laws are failing – cruelty and illegality remain widespread.”

► Consultations galore HSE consultation on anticoagulant rodenticides

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has opened a consultation on the renewal of anticoagulant rodenticides under the GB Biocidal Products Regulation.

These include difethialone, difenacoum, bromadiolone, brodifacoum, flocoumafen and coumatetralyl. Because these substances meet exclusion criteria under GB BPR, their continued use needs strong justification. The consultation asks whether alternatives are:

- Safer for human health, animal health and the environment
- Effective enough to control rats and mice
- Economically and practically viable
- Broad enough in range to prevent resistance.

If HSE decides that alternatives are suitable, authorisation could be restricted or refused. That would dramatically reduce the tools available for professional rodent management.

BPCA will submit a response on behalf of members, presenting evidence to safeguard these vital products.

BPCA Chief Executive Rosina Robson said: “Anticoagulant rodenticides are critical for

professional rodent management, safeguarding public health and infrastructure.

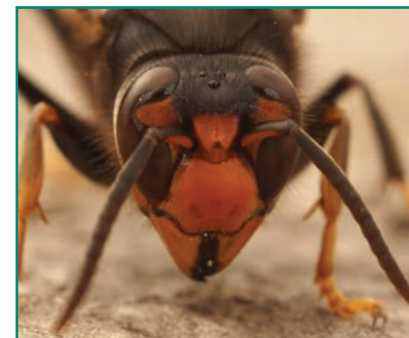
We’ll put forward a strong evidence-based response to protect this essential part of our toolkit, and we urge members to share expertise so we can speak with one powerful voice.”

► UK REACH and invasive species

The government is also consulting on chemical registration deadlines under UK REACH and exploring an alternative transitional model. BPCA is contributing to ensure pest professionals’ needs are fully understood. Meanwhile, outcomes are expected soon for Pathway Action Plans under the Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) strategy.

Consultations like these shape the very rules that govern our work. If BPCA didn’t respond, decisions could be made without any reference to real-world pest management.

By responding collectively, we make sure members’ voices are heard and our expertise is on record. Whether it’s about safeguarding rodenticides, improving licensing or influencing procurement rules, these submissions are essential to protect both public health and professional practice.



► Other changes pest professionals should watch

Area	What's changing	Why it matters
Small business protections	New rules on late payments, stricter maximum payment terms, stronger Small Business Commissioner.	Could ease cashflow pressures for small pest companies.
Wages and rights	Higher minimum pay for younger staff, day-one rights for sick pay and parental leave, ban on zero-hours contracts, stronger action on “fire and rehire”, flexible working as default.	Will raise staff costs and reshape recruitment and contracts.
Fleets	Plug-in van/truck grants extended to 2027, simpler DVLA process for EV conversions and repairs.	More options and less admin for businesses transitioning to electric.
Public procurement	Reforms to the Procurement Act 2023 will increase emphasis on social value and fair work standards.	BPCA members can stand out by showing quality, training and fair practices.

BPCA EMAIL

technical@bpca.org.uk



INBOX

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ASK THE TECHNICAL TEAM

What should be on my winter checklist?

As the days get shorter and the weather turns, it's worth giving your winter preparations a once-over to keep both your sites and yourself in good shape.

Bait stations - Check the condition, tethering and labels. Replace worn parts and test firing mechanisms. Cold can make plastic brittle, so ensure everything is safe and functional.

Proofing and maintenance - Revisit previous recommendations and offer to complete the work for clients. It helps reduce repeat or follow-ups later in winter.

Cleaning and inspection - Remove debris and inspect external kit for weather damage. It keeps sites compliant, tidy and ready for winter conditions.

Tyres and lights - Ensure good tread depth, working lights and top up fluids. Essential for safe driving in dark, wet conditions.

Winter checks - Book a professional winter safety check if possible. Prevents breakdowns and keeps your van roadworthy in cold weather.

Emergency supplies - Keep a breakdown kit in your car, plus a sleeping bag, food and water. Check out the RAC or AA website for advice on what you'll need. This is vital if you get stranded due to bad weather.

A few checks now can make the cold months safer, smoother, and more successful for everyone.

What should I do if I encounter the illegal use of a glue trap?

If you ever walk into a site and spot a glue board that's been placed without a licence, it's never a nice moment. You're likely to be dealing with a desperate client who thinks they're helping, but in reality, they're breaking the law.

For England and Wales, Defra's advice is clear. If you're sure the glue trap hasn't been set in line with licensing requirements, you should safely remove and dispose of it. If you're not sure and you're not in a position to remove it without trespassing, then the next step is to report the matter to the police as soon as possible.

Education is key here. Clients may not realise the law has changed, especially since the sale of glue traps is still legal and they can be found in many DIY stores and online. As professionals, it's on us to calmly explain the risks and help them find legal alternatives. In practice, many pest professionals will strike a deal with the client to remove the unlicensed glue trap safely. But if you need to, walk away and seek advice from your manager, BPCA or the police.

We all know how tricky these situations can be. You may not want to get someone in trouble who didn't understand the law, or you may not want to risk a longstanding relationship with a client. That's why empathy matters. Recognise the client's stress, then guide them toward the right and legal solution.

We know this guidance isn't good enough, and that's another example of how this poorly implemented law is unfairly impacting pest professionals.

If you encounter illegal activity, please share the details with BPCA at policy@bpca.org.uk. Every report strengthens our case when we lobby government. And don't forget: a client guidance document is available for you to download from the BPCA Member Library bpca.org.uk/library to help you explain the law to your customers.



Are you a BPCA member with a technical question? Get in touch...

technical@bpca.org.uk
01332 225 104
x.com/britpestcontrol

How do you choose the right spring trap?

When it comes to spring traps, there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Choosing the right one depends mainly on what you're targeting and where you're setting it. Get those two things wrong, and even the best trap won't do its job effectively. Start by checking which species you're dealing with. The Spring Traps Approval Order determines which traps are legal for different mammals, and the rules can vary across devolved nations. Always make sure your chosen trap complies with the law where you are working.

The environment plays just as important a role. For example, in internal lofts, you often have more flexibility. You can build tunnels to suit the space, and there's typically a lower risk of non-target captures.

Externally, it's a different story. Use purpose-built tunnels and baffles to keep non-target species safe and ensure your work remains compliant. After all, we're stewards of the environments we operate in. How easy is the trap to set? Can you confidently and safely set it in a tight loft space, on a crawl board, or in poor lighting? If another technician will be completing the follow-up, are they equally confident in checking and resetting it?

Think about logistics too. If you're trapping squirrels, you may need to deploy traps in batches to improve your success rate. Choose traps that are practical to carry and set in large numbers, even if it means a bigger upfront cost. The investment will pay off in fewer callbacks and happier customers. Check our infographic on the [next page](#) for more info.



WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

The members of our technical team are happy to come out to visit sites with BPCA members who are struggling with a tough infestation and need hands-on advice. Get in touch!



TRAPS THAT SPRING TO MIND

Identify the pest species you are dealing with.

Check the relevant legislation for the nation in which you are working. This will indicate who created the traps, what species they can be used against and how they should be used. Each spring trap could have restrictions such as: "the trap must be set in a natural or artificial tunnel which is, in either case, suitable for the purpose."

Choose your relevant legislation

The Spring Traps Approval (England) Order 2018

The Spring Traps Approval (Scotland) Order 2011

The Spring Traps Approval (Wales) Order 2019

The Spring Traps Approval Order (Northern Ireland) 2019

Squirrel

House mice

Peanut butter

Rice cakes

Chocolate

Pet food

+1

Select an attractant that best suits the pest you are targeting. You may need to consider which foods are accessible to pests, their palatability, and site restrictions, such as the use of nut-free products.

NO

Choose your attractant

Spring traps should be checked at regular intervals in accordance with legislative requirements. Spring traps must not be set in open or accessible areas where members of the public, animals and pets can gain access to them.

Don't forget your environmental risk assessment.

YES

Using rodenticides in conjunction with spring traps?

Use your environmental risk assessment to highlight risk to non-targets and implement control measures. This could be other wildlife, people and pets. Some artificial tunnels will restrict more non-targets than others. Signage could help prevent members of the public from putting their hands into the trap if used in areas such as under shelving or in loft spaces.

YES

Are you comfortable using these spring traps?

NO

It's vital to be confident in using spring traps to prevent harm to yourself and to select the appropriate trap for the pest you are dealing with. Attending a training course that covers traps on a Spring traps approval order is often beneficial.

The Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024 will require anyone using spring traps in Scotland to attend such training and pass the course.

Weasel

Rat

SECTOR SURVEY

THE FUTURE OF PEST MANAGEMENT

The pest management sector is under increasing scrutiny from legislators, researchers and animal welfare groups.

In order to protect your toolkit, set our direction and improve our services, BPCA really needs your input.

The survey will only take about 20 minutes, but your contribution will be extremely valuable.

Please help us to help you!

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OPENING DOORS TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF PEST PROFESSIONALS



SPEED VIEW

BPCA has launched pestcareers.org.uk, a dedicated online hub to inspire new entrants to the pest management profession

A new recruitment film, created with award-winning producers Liquona, showcases "the heart of pest management"

Members are invited to sign the Open Doors Charter, pledging to support inclusive recruitment and new entrants

BPCA is investing in a national social media campaign to reach thousands of potential recruits.



In this feature, Rosina Robson, BPCA Chief Executive, shares how the Association's new pestcareers.org.uk hub, recruitment film, Open Doors Charter and social media campaign are helping to attract a more diverse, skilled and inspired workforce into pest management.

When I first joined BPCA, one message came through loud and clear from members up and down the country: recruitment is tough. Whether you're running a small, family-owned firm or managing a team of technicians across multiple regions, you've probably felt the strain of trying to find and keep good people. It's no secret that our industry faces a demographic cliff edge.

Nearly 40% of the UK pest management workforce is expected to retire within the next decade, at precisely the same time as demand for professional pest management services continues to grow. The question is: who will step up to replace them? That's the challenge BPCA's pest careers project sets out to tackle.

Showcasing the heart of pest management

Our comprehensive campaign, led by BPCA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, aims to do something ambitious but vital: show the world what pest management really is.

We worked with award-winning production company Liquona, one of the UK's top 25 creative agencies, to bring our vision to life. The

film, titled "Drive the Talk / Split the Difference", was produced at a professional studio in London using a purpose-built virtual production set. The concept keeps a single pest control van as the visual anchor while split-screen scenes unfold around it, showing the breadth of work pest professionals carry out in different environments, from takeaways and stadiums to family gardens and homes.

Shot on a cinematic 4K setup with broadcast lighting and sound, the production team included an experienced BBC producer and creative director, along with professional crew and stylists. But the real stars of the film are our own members. Real pest professionals and BPCA volunteers stepped in as extras throughout the shoot, representing the diversity, warmth and professionalism that define our sector. Their input didn't stop at acting, as the script was shaped with feedback from volunteers across BPCA's EDI and Outreach and Communications Committees.

The result is a short, upbeat and genuinely human portrayal of our industry. The main character, a pest controller, walks us through a day in the job, solving problems for business

"Pest management is a career worth exploring for anyone who enjoys solving problems, wants variety in their day and likes helping people."

owners, advising the public, and even saving a child's birthday party. The message is clear: pest management is about protecting people, property and the environment. It is about variety, problem-solving and pride in doing something that matters.

As Katie Oliver, Liquona's lead producer, explained, "We wanted to create something with warmth and humour that shows the heart of pest management. It's not just about tackling pests, it's about helping people, solving problems and building meaningful careers."

The finished video runs for just over a minute, making it perfect for social media and recruitment use. Six shorter edits have been created for different platforms, alongside behind-the-scenes photography and a secondary film capturing the making of the project.

This film will be freely available for all BPCA members to use in their own recruitment campaigns, at events or in local schools. We want to put professional pest management firmly on the map as a career that makes a difference.

A new home for pest careers

The film sits at the centre of our brand-new online hub: pestcareers.org.uk. This is the first time our sector has had a dedicated space designed to inspire, inform and connect potential recruits with real career opportunities in pest management.

The hub isn't another jobs board. It's a place where people can explore what the industry does, what qualifications and training routes exist, and what life as a pest professional is really like.

Visitors can find honest stories from technicians, consultants and business owners across the UK, step-by-step guides on training, certification and starting out, customisable recruitment materials and onboarding templates for employers, and links to job boards and BPCA-approved training opportunities.

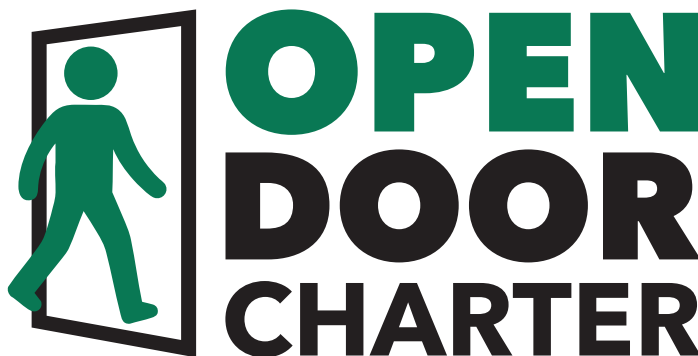
We've deliberately made the site open, inclusive and practical. From ex-forces personnel to school leavers, hospitality workers retraining, or parents returning to work, we want everyone to see that there's a place for them in pest management.

The Open Doors Charter

Alongside the hub, we're launching the Open Doors Charter, a sector-wide pledge for inclusivity and opportunity. Members who sign the charter commit to fostering an open, welcoming workplace culture, rejecting discrimination, and proactively supporting new entrants into the industry.

BPCA members who sign will receive an official Open Doors logo to display on their websites or marketing materials, signalling to potential recruits that their company values diversity and fair opportunity.

As the Charter states, "Together, we can build a pest management sector that embraces diversity, fosters inclusion and thrives on respect and equality." It's simple but powerful. Signing the charter says, "Our door is open. You're welcome here."





"It's not just about tackling pests, it's about helping people, solving problems and building meaningful careers."

Built by the industry, for the industry

What makes this project so special is that it's truly powered by the profession itself. Our EDI Committee, made up of member volunteers, has worked tirelessly alongside the BPCA staff team to shape every element.

As Julia Pittman, Chair of the EDI Committee, explains: "When we asked professionals what they loved most about their work, they talked about the variety, the problem-solving, the independence and above all, helping people. Jobseekers today are looking for exactly those qualities."

That insight guided every part of the campaign. The language we use, the stories we tell and even the visuals all show pest management as the modern, respected, skilled trade that it is. We've had technicians, business owners and committee members appear on camera, review scripts and share personal stories for the new careers hub. Their passion and authenticity shine through.

Why this matters now

This isn't just a recruitment exercise. It's about safeguarding the future of our profession. Pest management protects public health, defends the food supply chain and supports every sector

from housing to hospitality. Yet we still face misconceptions, with some people thinking pest control is "just about killing things" or "not a skilled trade".

By showing the human side of the work, how pest professionals prevent disease, protect property and solve complex environmental problems, we're changing that narrative.

We're also ensuring that our workforce better reflects the communities we serve. Diversity strengthens businesses, drives innovation and helps us connect more effectively with our clients. As our EDI Charter reminds us, inclusion isn't a tick-box exercise; it's a long-term commitment to making our workplaces safer, fairer and more dynamic.

A national campaign

To raise awareness, BPCA is making a significant investment in a national social media campaign to promote the film and careers hub. This will expose thousands of people to pest management as a professional, rewarding and meaningful career. By reaching people where they already are online, we're hoping to spark curiosity, challenge assumptions and drive visitors directly to pestcareers.org.uk, where they can take the first step towards joining the industry.

Looking ahead

The careers hub and video are just the start. Over the next year, we'll continue adding more resources, stories and tools to support members and aspiring professionals alike. We're currently working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) partnership team, to promote the sector through their network.

I truly believe this project represents one of the most important steps BPCA has ever taken to secure the future of our sector. Because when someone joins pest management, they're not just taking a job, they're joining a profession that protects people, property and the planet. That's something to be proud of.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

1 SIGN THE OPEN DOORS CHARTER

to show your commitment to inclusive recruitment and get access to the official logo. bpca.org.uk/library

2 USE THE RECRUITMENT VIDEO

on your website, at schools or career events, or in your social media campaigns. youtube.com/bpcavideo

3 SHARE YOUR STORY

by sending us blogs, videos or testimonials for inclusion on pestcareers.org.uk.

4 UPLOAD YOUR VACANCIES

to the BPCA Jobs Board to connect with new recruits. bpca.org.uk/jobs

5 SPREAD THE WORD

through your own networks, whether that's local schools, job centres or community groups.

If you'd like to get involved, email hello@bpca.org.uk and our team will be happy to help.



A NEW ERA FOR RODENTICIDE USE

REFLECTING ON THE JOURNEY AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

A hundred years ago, pest controllers managed rodents with poisons so toxic they could kill a person as easily as a rat.

Imagine the horror of today's professionals if they saw arsenic and strychnine being sprinkled freely in homes and fields, as was common back then.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. If the industry had known then, what we know now, could history have taken a more sustainable path for rodent control?

With the latest changes to rodenticide use due to take effect in a few months' time; PPC magazine talked to Dr Matthew Davies, Training and Certification Work Group Lead at the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU UK), about the changes that have impacted professional rodenticide use and what the future holds from 2026.

"Few areas of pest management have changed as dramatically as the tools we use to control rodents," says Matthew.

"Over the last century, rodenticides have evolved from those highly toxic compounds, administered without formal training, to the sophisticated and highly regulated formulations bound by stewardship requirements that dominate the market today."

He continued, "Along the way, the industry has faced recurring challenges - resistance, risk to non-targets, and growing scrutiny over environmental impact.

"Before stewardship framed the sector, it was chemistry and the discovery of the latest active substances that punctuated developments through the 20th century. With the power of

hindsight, what were called significant rodent control triumphs at the time, would today be framed in very different terms."

Matthew explains: "Warfarin is a good example. When it came into use in the 1940s it was to be the chemical revolution of the time. But in fact, this was also the beginning of a dangerous dependency."

Within a decade, the promise of broad success with Warfarin, and new anticoagulants like Diphacinone, was thwarted as resistance began to take hold.

And by the 1960s, it was clear that the sector needed new tools for control.

Matthew reflects, "Second-generation anticoagulants then arrived in the 1970s. For decades they were treated as the silver bullets, though in recent years resistant populations have developed to some SGARs.

"Looking back at the pre-stewardship era there's a clear lesson: chemistry alone cannot outpace evolution.

"Each new molecule provided temporary relief but at the cost of long-term sustainability.

"This reminds us that the story of rodent control isn't just about science; it's about restraint.

"Without stewardship, even the most brilliant discoveries may become less effective."

After the millennium things started to change. CRRU UK was established in 2004, as an industry-led initiative to address the environmental and non-target risks associated with rodenticide use.

The sector started to face tighter regulations, restrictions on certain active ingredients, and calls for more rigorous professional standards.

One of the most visible early changes was drawing a clearer line between professional

and public use.

That meant limiting pack sizes available to the general public, and reducing the strength of the rodenticides available to non-professional users.

It was about making sure effective products were in the right hands, while still giving householders access to safe and appropriate solutions.

**"It's no longer
just about
controlling the
pest; it's also about
controlling risk."**

Environmental pressure drives change

Environmental awareness was increasing alongside research into the potential impact of chemicals, including rodenticides.

"The industry recognised it couldn't stand still - we had to take responsibility, and CRRU UK became the vehicle to deliver that," says Matthew.

"Concern over the wider impact of rodenticides on wildlife and the environment was the spark that led to the first CRRU UK stewardship scheme. Looking back, it's amazing how far we've come in the last 25 years!

Before stewardship, training requirements weren't formalised and any checks at the point-of-sale were voluntary.

Since the introduction of the UK Rodenticide

Stewardship Regime in 2016, we've seen a huge shift in rodent control.

It's no longer just about controlling the pest; it's also about controlling risk. That means minimising residues to protect wildlife, and ensuring that everyone using products is competent.

A key part of this is to utilise Integrated Pest Management and follow the risk hierarchy as laid out in the CRRU UK Code of Best Practice.

Designed to meet the 'High Level Principles' set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the regime delivers three key benefits - governance of the supply chain, a competent workforce, and the monitoring of compliance.

Matthew continues: "A cornerstone of this shift was the requirement that for the first time, in April 2016, professional rodenticides could only be purchased by those who could demonstrate competence.

"This was a game-changer for the industry. Certification through CRRU UK-approved training and certification or alignment with farm assurance schemes (FAS) meant that tens of thousands of users - from pest control technicians to gamekeepers and farmers - had to meet a consistent standard of knowledge and practice.

"Proof of competence in the farming sector was one of the biggest obstacles we faced at the time. Regulating by far the largest sector for rodenticide use proved to be a huge challenge, as the farming sector deemed they had insufficient time for farmers to obtain the certification needed."

Membership of a CRRU UK-approved FAS became a short-term way of ensuring a level of best practice in the farming sector.

Alignment of the FAS standard with the CRRU UK Code of Best Practice followed in 2018.

"The days of no stewardship, little guidance or only informal training and certification are now firmly resigned to the history books."

Stewardship begins to shape best practice

Changing attitudes among rodenticide users is the key to delivering better stewardship practices now and in the future - and the latest data shows clear progress.

Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) surveys, commissioned by CRRU UK, showed marked improvement between 2020 and 2023.

Results highlighted a significant increase in awareness of CRRU UK, with 50% of respondents stating that they no longer automatically presume that they will apply a rodenticide when they approach a new rodent problem.

Progress in stewardship was especially evident with farmer rodenticide users who demonstrated advances in training, continuing professional development (CPD), environmental awareness, and product knowledge - evidence that the stewardship message was being absorbed and applied in practice.

Rodent control sector engages in voluntary action

At the end of 2023 CRRU UK announced several voluntary interventions which led to the withdrawal of 'open area' and 'waste dump' use of second generation anticoagulants (SGARs).

"Importantly these were the areas where exposure to wildlife was considered to be most likely," Matthew highlights. "So when withdrawal of these areas of use was formally authorised in 2024, we revised the CRRU UK Code of Best Practice with new guidance, something that was especially important for the gamekeeping sector, who were one of the groups most impacted by this change."

The future of sustainable rodent control

As we look to the future, the next milestone comes with the enhanced training requirements for all groups coming into effect from next year.

"The truth is, despite all the progress we've made, the levels of anticoagulant residues in wildlife have barely shifted," Matthew reports.

"That's why we're strengthening the system even further. It's not about making life harder for professionals; it's about using rodenticides responsibly and protecting the environment we all depend on, while preserving access to anticoagulants as a critical tool of professional rodent control."

New competence standards for 2026

For pest controllers there are two clear pathways to demonstrate the competence needed to purchase professional-grade rodenticides from 1 January 2026.

"If a qualification was gained before 2021, it won't carry you past the 2026 deadline," Matthew explains.

This means you'll need to either re-qualify or demonstrate ongoing competence through a CRRU UK-approved CPD scheme; and that includes earning at least three CRRU UK rodent control-specific points each year.

"Professionals need to take action now, to

have enough time to take a course and pass the exam, or accrue the relevant number of CPD points this year, in readiness for 2026," urges Matthew.

"For those with more recent certifications, the rules buy a little breathing space. Those who have qualified within the five years leading up to 2026, will still be covered until that certificate hits its five-year limit."

"These changes are about raising the bar across the whole industry. The days of no stewardship, little guidance or only informal training and certification are now firmly resigned to the history books.

"The future looks very different, and much more responsible."

"Eventually everyone using rodenticides will face the same choice: re-qualification or CPD. This is the way to make sure that every professional is equipped with the most up-to-date knowledge available, ensuring safer working practices and the best possible outcome for effective rodent control, wildlife and the environment."



Looking ahead: the future of rodent control

Where do we go from here? A few likely trends stand out:

Smarter monitoring

Remote sensors and digital bait stations are already entering the market, giving real-time data and reducing unnecessary visits.

Biologicals and new modes of action

With pressure on anticoagulants, research into non-chemical or biological alternatives will intensify.

Tighter regulation

Access to rodenticides will remain under scrutiny; ongoing stewardship will be essential to preserve tools.

Integrated solutions

Pest controllers will increasingly blend technology and environmental management with traditional methods.

The future pest controller will likely be part-scientist, part-technician, part-data analyst. What won't change is the core challenge: rodents will continue to adapt, and professionals will need to stay one step ahead. thinkwildlife.org/ training-certification



PPC Roundtable: Break-back traps under pressure



Kunal Puri **KP**
BPCA's Technical
Committee, Chair



Chris Cagienard **CC**
Pest Solutions



Andrew Tyson **AT**
Guardian Pest
Management



James Waterhouse **JW**
Peledex



Mike Ayers **MA**
Precision Pest
Management Solutions

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At PPC Live 2025 in Harrogate, a small group of pest professionals gathered around a table to tackle one of the most deceptively simple tools in the pest controller's kit – the break-back trap.

Led by Kunal Puri, Chair of BPCA's Technical Committee, the conversation soon revealed just how much nuance there is behind something most of us see every day without a second thought.

KP Break-back traps are exempt from formal regulation, but that doesn't mean they're outside the law. We still have a duty under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to make sure the animals we catch don't suffer unnecessarily.

A humane trap should kill at least 80% of target animals within five minutes.

Research by Dr Sandra Baker showed that many commercially available traps failed that test, mainly due to wear in the mechanism. It's a reminder that even the simplest tools deserve our attention.

AT Sometimes they're great, sometimes useless. I work in London, so every site behaves differently. Some rats ignore bait completely; others go for it immediately.

I've found that the more you understand the layout and the runs, the better results you get. I use mostly plastic traps these days. They tend to hold up.

CC Same here. We've moved away from wooden traps. They might pass an assessment when they're new, but after ten uses, they're falling apart.

The modern plastic ones are far more durable, but not all lures are created equal. Some just don't attract anything.

AT I swear by peanut butter and Nutella. Cheap, reliable, and they smell fantastic.

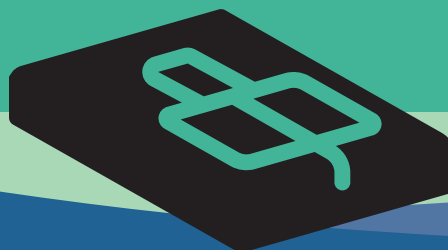
CC (laughs) We've actually had better luck once the traps are "weathered" – a bit of natural scent left on them helps.

"They're getting wiser. Behavioural resistance is a growing challenge."

KP That makes sense. Using traps that have already picked up proteins from previous use can be a natural lure. It's similar to the principle of pre-baiting. That said, neophobia – fear of new objects – is still a real issue, especially with rats. Placement is key.

PLACEMENT MAKES PERFECT

KP If you can, use the environment to your advantage. For example, positioning traps in a run where a rodent has to cross them often improves the success of the traps. Just don't leave traps exposed outdoors – they can pose risks to non-target or protected species.



"You forget the basics sometimes - it takes five minutes to remind yourself, and that reminder can make all the difference on site."

MA There's no welfare benefit to checking traps too frequently either. Once a day is sufficient. The important part is sensible placement and good luring. Directing the animal across the kill bar reduces the risk of foul catches.

CC Exactly. Technicians also need to think about what's around the trap. If a rodent hesitates or slows down just before it reaches the trigger, that's when you get those awkward, inhumane catches.

MA Behavioural resistance is becoming a bigger challenge too. They're getting wiser. If they've seen traps or felt vibration before, they'll learn to avoid them.

A QUESTION OF REGULATION

KP The Spring Trap Approval Order first came in back in 1957, and the latest update was in 2018. It governs which traps can be used for wild mammals, like the Fenn and the DOC series, but not break-back traps for rats and mice. That's where the grey area lies.

JW If an approval system did come in, it could be complicated. You'd end up with lists saying you can use this trap for house mice but not field mice, even if they're physically identical.

CC But if we don't lead on this, others will. We've been here before with glue traps. Animal welfare activists will look at the 20% that don't die within five minutes and call it cruelty. Manufacturers are unlikely to join voluntarily.

AT I'd actually buy an approved trap if it existed. At least you'd know it's been tested and meets the standard.

KP Agreed. It's about demonstrating professionalism. We need to show we're taking welfare seriously, not waiting to be forced into it.

Lessons from glue traps

CC We could've handled glue boards better as an industry. We spent years on the defensive, saying "but we need them," while the public saw videos of suffering animals. By the time we tried to explain professional use versus misuse, the decision had already been made for us.

If we don't get ahead of the conversation on break-back traps, we'll face the same issue again.

KP Exactly. Professionals should be the ones leading the charge on humane methods. We care about animal welfare as much as anyone else, because it's part of doing our job properly.

AT People still buy glue boards online, by the way. I've gone into properties and had to explain that using them without a licence is now a criminal offence.

KP Yes, they're popping up under names like "rodent blanket". It's very hard to control the sale of those imports.

CC It's frustrating – the rules change for us, but the same products are still sold online to the public.

TRAPS VS RODENTICIDES

CC One of the biggest future challenges for our toolkit is the reduction of rodenticides. If regulators or activists then turn their sights on spring traps, we'll be in serious trouble. That's why the industry needs to take the lead now.

MA It's about smarter use, not necessarily more use. You can get the same outcomes with better trap placement and lure choice. A measured 80% humane-kill rate in under five minutes isn't just a European benchmark; it's good practice.

KP We've got to be proactive. That five-minute rule isn't optional. If an animal isn't dead within that window, it's technically illegal under welfare law.

JW And if we ever reach the point of trap approval, we'll need proper testing. It can't be guesswork or marketing claims.

TAKEAWAYS

While there were differences in practice and opinion, the room agreed on a few essentials:

Professional responsibility

Pest controllers must use traps that kill humanely and maintain them properly.

Placement and lure choice matter

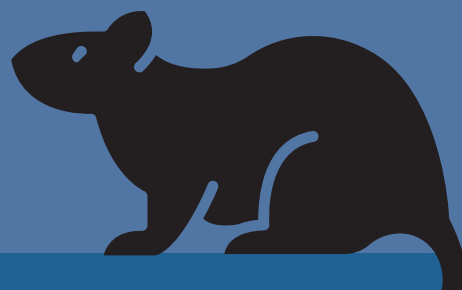
Site knowledge and experience often make the difference between a clean kill and a foul catch.

Industry leadership

BPCA members want to get ahead of regulation by supporting research and best practice on humane trapping.

The conversation at PPC Live made one thing clear: break-back traps may be simple, but using them properly is anything but.

As one delegate joked on the way out, "Maybe it's time we gave the old snap trap a bit more respect – after all, it's still doing the heavy lifting."



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SPEED
VIEW

Integrated pest management (IPM) is useful, but combining it with integrated risk management (IRM) can sharpen your approach

Think strategically (big goals) then pick your tactics (practical steps)

A site map that highlights "hotspots" of rodent activity helps you target resources

Single-feed and multi-feed baits each have advantages - food competition often decides which to use

Tailor your methods to different areas of a site based on risk to people, products, and non-target wildlife.

THE ART OF WAR PAW

UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGIES OF RODENT CONTROL



Alex Wade joined us at a BPCA Digital Forum to discuss a fresh way of handling rodent control. He believes that while integrated pest management (IPM) is essential, we can improve results by adding integrated risk management (IRM) into our thinking. This means looking not only at the rodent itself, but also how each part of a site might be affected by a rodent infestation or the control methods we use.



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This article is part of Digital Forum 29 and available on our website! Watch the whole 37-minute talk there.

bpca.org.uk/cpd-videos
(login required).

Understanding strategy and tactics

I often like to reference an old piece of wisdom from the Chinese strategist Sun Tzu: "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is just noise." In terms of pest management, this means:

- **Strategy:** Where am I trying to get to, and why?
- **Tactics:** The individual steps that get me there.

Plenty of times, I see people rushing to tactics, perhaps slapping down bait boxes, without a proper strategy.

But if we only rely on standard routines, we might miss the fact that some zones are critical, some are not, and some might carry enormous environmental complications.

My aim is to help us slow down, define the strategy (the bigger picture), then apply the right tactics (practical methods).

Building a site map and turning it into a heat map

One tool I can't recommend enough is the humble site map. Often we treat it like an afterthought, merely recording where we put bait boxes or traps. But it can do so much more.

1. **Pinpoint hotspots:** As I walk around, I note where rats are leaving droppings, gnaw marks, or footprints.
2. **Colour-code activity:** I'll mark areas of heavier activity in one colour, lighter activity in another.
3. **Layer in risk:** I might highlight if a building is storing sensitive stock or if it's near a nature reserve that could be harmed by rodenticide. This way, I don't just see "we have rats." I see exactly where they concentrate, which parts of the site are higher risk, and how the infestation might threaten the client's operations.

I can bring that map to the client and explain, "Here's our critical zone where I'll need to be more aggressive, and here's a less problematic spot where we can afford a gentler approach."

Counting rodents: size and distribution

In the past, I might have said, "There are lots of rats." But that statement alone doesn't help me shape a strategy. Instead, I look at two factors:

- **Population size:** Are we dealing with a few individuals or a large colony? I'll use cameras, tracking dust, or pre-bait consumption to gauge this.
- **Distribution:** Are they all clustering around one building or spread across the entire property?

A big spread of rodents might be less urgent if each corner only has one or two animals. But a single corner jam-packed with a large group of rats might be a top priority.

This leads me to tailor my methods; fewer, well-placed controls in low-density zones and a more intense effort where numbers spike.

Where IPM and IRM cross over

IPM gives us that escalation from lower-impact methods (proofing, hygiene) to more potent ones (rodenticides). IRM is all about the risk to the site and to the wider environment.

So if I see a place with high risk (for instance, a server room or food storage) but a low environmental threat (maybe it's deep inside a building with no chance for non-target interference), I can escalate my approach with stronger baits or methods.

If I'm near a boundary next to farmland or a nature reserve, that's probably a higher environmental risk. I'll be more cautious with rodenticides, maybe leaning on physical or mechanical controls.

By mixing IPM's escalation ladder with IRM's site-wide perspective, I can choose exactly which rung on the ladder is appropriate in which part of the site.

Single-feed vs multi-feed: it's not just convenience

I'm often asked, "Which bait is best: single-feed or multi-feed?" The answer usually depends on resistance patterns and how much alternative food is available.

If you're up against an environment where rats have plenty to eat, a single-feed rodenticide can be more effective because the rodent only needs one small dose. Multi-feed might fail if they nibble only occasionally.

On the flipside, single-feed baits can sometimes mean rodents get repeated lethal doses if they keep eating.

That ups the risk of secondary poisoning when predators or scavengers come along. If the environment is lower risk or your time is super limited, single-feed might be the better tool.

But if you can keep things carefully controlled and the rats have fewer competing food sources, a multi-feed rodenticide might do the trick and reduce the over-dosing problem.

Pulse, saturation, or speed baiting

Depending on the product labels (which are always king in deciding what's allowed), I may use different baiting strategies:

Saturation baiting

Keep the bait topped up so no rodent goes short. This method gives a predictable decline in rat numbers but might mean certain dominant rats gorge themselves on repeated doses.

Pulse baiting

Particularly handy with single-feed actives. I put

out only as much as I expect the leading “alpha” rats to consume, wait for them to die, then pulse again to catch the subordinates.

Speed baiting

Usually associated with cholecalciferol, where rodents typically stop eating after ingesting a lethal amount. I can replenish at key intervals without worrying they’ll overfeed.

Again, each approach aligns with the environment I’m dealing with. A sensitive site with predator risk might benefit from pulse baiting to limit overdosing, while a severe but self-contained infestation might suit saturation or speed baiting.

Using monitors as pre-bait

People tend to see non-toxic monitors as just a detection device, but I love them for “pre-baiting.”

If rats get used to nibbling on something that matches my eventual toxic bait (similar base cereal, for example), then once I swap to the lethal version, they’ll feed without that dreaded neophobia.

You can see an immediate jump in consumption on day one because the rodents no longer treat the station as suspicious. It’s a small detail but can shave days off a treatment timeline.

Varying tactics within one site

One of my main messages is that a single site doesn’t always need a single approach.

Part of the site might have a big environmental risk (close to a pond, farmland, or nature reserve), so I might emphasise traps or covered-and-protected bait with minimal rodenticides.

Another section might house valuable stock, so a more potent rodenticide is justified.

Yet another might just have a low-level issue where proofing and hygiene alone will do.

This is the spirit of IRM: flexible yet structured, ensuring I only push to higher interventions when it’s truly needed.

Why I believe IPM and IRM fit together

IPM was never meant to ignore the site’s bigger context; it was just originally centred on choosing the appropriate control technique for the pest species and severity.

But now, with the growth of non-target risks, public scrutiny, and complex premises, adding IRM helps us handle each building or location on its own terms.

This combined viewpoint means:

1. We handle rodents effectively where it matters most, giving us time to do a more measured approach elsewhere.

2. We minimise side effects, like secondary poisoning of birds of prey or contamination.
3. We show clients the logic behind our chosen methods: “Here’s why I’m going with traps in your food store, and a combination of traps and rodenticides in your loading bay.”

Wrapping up

My goal in promoting an “integrated risk management” perspective isn’t to replace IPM, but to supercharge it.

I still start by identifying the pest, blocking off food, water, and harbourage, and then using a proportionate chemical intervention if necessary.

But at the same time, I’m mapping out which corners of the site are higher or lower risk, which areas demand urgent action, and which might be handled more gently.

Working this way, I find I can adapt to sudden changes; maybe an outbreak spikes in one block, or new wildlife nesting near another block.

Because I have an overarching strategy, I don’t get lost in the details or stuck with rigid tactics.

I’ve got my plan, but I’m ready to pivot if the site’s needs shift.

Ultimately, that’s the best of both worlds: the structure of IPM and the holistic thinking of IRM.

Together, they give me a more confident handle on rodent control, while safeguarding wildlife and satisfying each client’s unique requirements.

PRACTICAL POINTERS FROM MY DAY-TO-DAY

Keep refining your site map

Each new finding of droppings or gnaw marks can mean a tweak to that plan. This is especially key if the site changes layout or stores different materials.

Draw up your strategy while driving over

As soon as I know the client’s issues, I’m already thinking which zones might be highest risk.

Set explicit goals

If the client needs rodents gone before a big audit next week, that changes my approach.

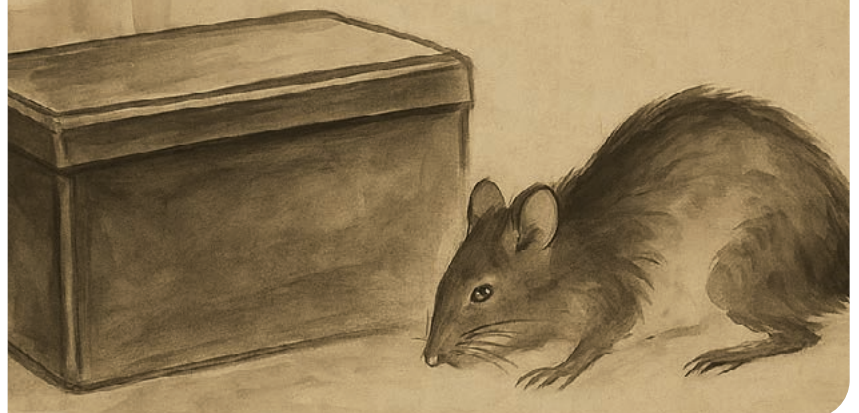
Embrace partial solutions

Not every corner needs bait boxes if it’s low risk, or maybe it’s best with only a trap.

Communicate your reasons

The more the client understands that you’re treating areas differently because of real risk factors, the more they value your professional judgement.

“Pre-bait your stations with non-toxic feed - you’ll see the rodents get comfy, then they’ll hit your lethal bait from day one.”





INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO BED BUG MANAGEMENT

In this article, Dr Richard Naylor and Alexia Naylor from the Bed Bug Foundation share their perspective on how bed bug treatments are evolving, what pest professionals need to know in 2025, and the highs and lows of testing treatments (including voluntarily sleeping with bed bugs).

We respond to bed bug queries from the public every single day. The people who contact us are often at breaking point. One email that landed in our inbox recently simply read: "This ordeal has been mentally and physically exhausting. It's affecting my ability to work and take care of my children. I'm at my wits' end. I cannot afford to keep throwing money at ineffective treatments. Can you advise me on the most effective products or methods to finally rid my home of bed bugs?"

This is what we do at the Bed Bug Foundation: we try to bridge the gap between the science and the suffering. In this article, we want to share what we've learned recently in our testing labs, and offer practical suggestions that might help pest controllers refine their approach.

Getting under the covers: bed bug biology

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) have a six-to-eight-week generation time at 25°C. They feed once per life stage and, under the right conditions, a female can lay 15 to 25 eggs per week. We once stocked a demo dome for a trade show and, when we opened it up 15 months later, found live bugs still inside.

The Cimicidae family includes about 100 members. All rely on a host that returns to the same place to rest or sleep, like bats and nesting birds. In Europe, we typically encounter the

common bed bug, the European bat bug, the tropical bed bug and the martin bug. The latter are often mistaken for bed bugs when they end up inside homes.

Warren Booth's lab recently published research showing that bed bugs have been living alongside humans for around 245,000 years. That makes them one of our oldest "urban pests".

How they get in – and where they go

Bed bugs don't fly. They climb, crawl and hitchhike. The most common way they enter a property is via luggage, clothing or furniture. In flats and HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation), they can spread through electrical outlets, pipework and cracks.

Once they've fed, bed bugs look for nearby shelter, usually within half a metre of the host. Over time, they build aggregations. When disturbed



An online CPD quiz based on this feature is now available on the BPCA website.

BPCA Registered members and anyone with a MyBPCA account can take a CPD quiz at any time bpca.org.uk/find-cpd or sign up at bpca.org.uk/me





Dogs are used because their superior sense of smell accurately locates hidden bed bug infestations by detecting their specific pheromones. Benji (pictured) is a Bed Bug Foundation certified bed bug detection dog.

“We hid vials around a bus. The dogs found them all. We found one.”

or overcrowded, they disperse. Ironically, DIY treatments often trigger this dispersal.

In our test bedrooms, we’ve found that eight out of ten hungry bugs will feed on their first night with a host present. They detect CO₂ and heat, and that’s their cue to start foraging. They’re negatively phototropic, so when you’re inspecting a room, start on the darker side.

Bites tend to appear in lines, especially along the edges of clothing or sheets. Some people barely react; others require antihistamines or medical attention. Once fed, bed bugs defecate almost immediately, producing dark, watery spots. Exuviae from weekly moults also accumulate around harbourages.

What we’re seeing in 2025

When bed bugs made headlines across Europe in late 2023, we wanted to see if the panic matched the data. We looked at our Bed Bug Foundation specimen ID service, which has been running for years. In 2023, 20% of the submissions we received were bed bugs - a normal proportion.

Interestingly, 2021 saw a dip to 16%, which aligns with data from the Swiss Pest Advisory Service. From 2010 to 2018, bed bugs steadily increased. Then Covid hit, hospitality shut down,

and the bugs took a hit. They’re coming back, but not explosively. It’s more of a slow, steady recovery.

Resistance: the hard truth

In 2022, we tested multiple field strains of bed bugs against various professional insecticides. Most products, even after 36 hours of exposure, didn’t kill a single bug. The only exceptions were both heavy on pyrethroids. The problem? In practice, bugs aren’t exposed for 36 hours. They walk across treated surfaces for seconds. If that’s all it takes to reinfest a treated room, we’re in trouble.

Desiccant dusts: what works and why

We tested two categories: diatomaceous earth (natural) and synthetic silica dioxide (like ChinChex). Fresh, dry diatomaceous earth killed all bugs within four days. But after a month in 40% Relative Humidity (RH), it took 19 days. At 85% RH, half the bugs were still alive after two months.

ChinChex, in contrast, killed 100% in two hours under continuous exposure and maintained efficacy under high humidity. In real-world intermittent exposure scenarios, it still achieved full mortality within five weeks, unless RH hit 93%, in which case it took a little longer.





People often confuse bed bugs with other small insects like carpet beetles (pictured above) and booklice due to similar appearances. Other common mix-ups include cockroach nymphs, fleas, and ticks, as well as other common skin conditions or insect bites. Olei, CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons

We also found that bed bugs die off naturally at very high humidity levels, probably due to fungal infections.

Monitoring: the good, the bad and the misleading

Why monitor? For early detection, complaint resolution, or as part of ongoing treatment. We tested over a dozen monitors, including sticky traps, passive crevice traps, pitfall designs, and active monitors that use heat or CO₂.

Sticky traps designed for cockroaches were generally ineffective. Bed bugs can't grip plastic or glossy card well. Crevice traps and monitors made of fibrous materials performed better.

Adding heat or CO₂ greatly improved catch rates. But smart tech must balance functionality, cost, discretion and ease of use for pest controllers and hotel staff alike.

Misidentification: still a major issue

People confuse all sorts of things for bed bugs: booklice, woodlice (somehow), minute pirate bugs, and most commonly, carpet beetles. Only carpet beetles share the same habitat, and their larvae (woolly bears) can cause allergic reactions.

Dogs are still the gold standard for detection. We tested this in Switzerland. We hid vials around a bus. The dogs found them all. We found one. It was humbling.

A cautious approach: containment first

You can't fix what you haven't found. Confirm the pest. Identify infested items. Deal with beds and sofas before dispersal spreads the infestation.

Start with heat, steam or sprays, but be thorough. Encasing mattresses and bed bases helps eliminate harborage and makes inspection easier. Isolate the bed: no contact with the wall, no trailing sheets, interceptors on legs.

Treat cracks and crevices around the bed, and consider replacing beds with metal-framed models if reinfestation is likely.

More than ever, successful bed bug control is about containment, confirmation, and careful strategy. It's about using the tools that work for the environment you're in.

We're here to help where we can, and to keep testing new ideas, including some that require sleeping in a bed full of bugs. (Don't worry, we now use a separate test room. Alexia drew the line at testing in our bedroom.)

NEW TOOLS IN THE PIPELINE

EXHALE

A CO₂-emitting device that convincingly simulates a host. It reliably triggers foraging.

SIMULAIR MONITOR

A Swedish design using heat, CO₂ and a pitfall trap. Effective at luring bugs from all areas of the room.

APREHEND

A fungal biopesticide (*Beauveria bassiana*) currently used in North America. Field trials are currently underway in the UK. It showed outstanding residual efficacy with very low volumes applied.

"Repellents might keep bugs off the bed, but use them in an infested room and you'll just spread the problem."

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REMOTE MONITORING IS THE ANSWER! BUT WHAT IS THE QUESTION?



As pest managers look to incorporate more technology into treatment plans, Tom Holmes, of Tom Holmes Consulting, shares some of his thoughts on the benefits of remote monitoring and how we can sell these services to clients.

For several years we've been presented with multiple new remote monitoring solutions for rodent management.

In many ways, it's a bit overwhelming to understand how they all work and where they might fit.

The feedback I get from service companies, both within the UK and further afield, from sole traders to multi-nationals, is mixed at best.

But given some of the real challenges our industry is facing right now, surely these solutions should be a great fit for our traditionally 'old school' industry?

Cards on the table time. My personal view is that there has to be a place for real-time, remote monitoring within professional pest management. And I'm going to make the case for why.

Firstly, let's agree what's the problem that we're trying to solve. I've spoken before about how I believe that our role as the professional pest management industry is to help customers maintain public health, using our skills, professional expertise and available tools to manage the risks associated with pests.

But specifically, what 'problems' does remote monitoring have the potential to help us with?

First off, let's be clear – Nothing will replace the fundamentals of environmental management, (removing food, water and harbourage) and proofing sites, delivered by trained professionals. They are, (or should be), givens.

That accepted, it could be argued that traditional methods for monitoring rodent activity can be labour intensive, reactive, unfocussed, inefficient and inconclusive.

That's not to say that our long-relied-upon tools of snap traps, monitoring baits and rodenticides (RIP to glue boards?) won't continue to be the key tools for us going forward.

But for genuine monitoring, I'd suggest technology should now be able to help us out.

Let's agree upon what we are talking about here: whilst I believe the 'product' these technologies can give us is ultimately insight, we must accept there's going to be some techy kit required.

Typically all remote monitoring systems have four elements to them:

1. A device to capture the data (ie cameras, snap traps, pressure sensor pads)
2. A communications mechanism to transfer the data from site (cellular, wi-fi, loRa)
3. A cloud-based storage area for data (a huge warehouse somewhere in the world, full of servers)
4. A visual representation of the data (an app, web-portal or integration with an existing back-end system).

The most familiar part to us all is usually 'the device'; often a relatively standard-looking snap trap with a small box of electronics bolted on, or possibly some sort of detection device, (camera, motion sensor, heat sensor or pressure sensor), often packaged up in a pretty familiar-looking rodent station style box.

That's the kit required, and there are multiple types of all shapes and sizes available to us.

But rather than talk about specific solutions, let's consider what the concept of remote monitoring can bring to the party.

I believe there's plenty.

/continued...

IMPROVED SERVICE

The brutal truth is that we're a reactive industry. We go to a site, do some work, leave some kit, then come back in six weeks and deal with whatever we find.

Or worse, we get an unscheduled callout from the client, screaming that there's a mouse running around in their factory, taking a hit to our profitability and reputation.

Real-time, remote monitoring has the potential to flip this, providing the peace of mind of 24/7 monitoring to our clients.

And should the worst happen and there be some rodent activity, we'll know about it long before the customer, (and should we choose to do so), be on site to start dealing with it before they even know there's a problem. That is real service.

BOOST SUSTAINABILITY

We know that large end-users are hugely motivated by their sustainability programs, often with targets in place and positive noise made about the part they're playing.

If we can detect pest problems as they emerge, we can intervene earlier, likely resulting in more targeted treatments, fewer chemicals used and fewer unscheduled site visits in vans. Tick, tick and tick!

"Remote monitoring devices should be able to tell us where the activity is before we even get to site."

IMPROVED EFFICIENCIES

Like them or not, rodent stations provide a safe and professional environment to monitor, trap, (and if necessary), safely house rodenticide over the treatment period. However, as we know, large sites may have tens of rodent stations, all of which require regular inspection.

That's a physical and time commitment; to get on our knees, open each station, evaluate what we find and maintain as appropriate.

Then, if we have identified an increase in rodent activity, the real work starts.

Remote monitoring devices should be able to tell us where the activity is before we even get to site, and when we do, we can target these locations straight away to find the root cause.

With this focussed approach, as service companies, we are provided with the choice of either spending less time on site for that visit but providing a better service and improving our profitability, or spending the time we do have on site more efficiently, doing 'actual pest management', rather than walking the site and opening boxes.

Typically, we would gratefully accept a bit of both.

HELP MANAGE THE RECRUITMENT CRISIS.

We're all feeling it. How do we retain and attract employees at a cost that keeps us profitable?

Being a technician is a tough job. Early starts, highly physical, demands investigative skills and to safely use toxic chemicals.

It's a hard sell. And somehow, we've got to balance increasing operational costs with fair wages.

Amongst the well-publicised crisis of an aging workforce, if we're going to both keep the experience we have and attract new talent, any tools that have the potential to simplify the physical demands of the job, upskill more recent recruits and attract tech savvy younger generations, has to be strongly considered.

INSIGHT (THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF BENEFITS!)

All the benefits above are highly relevant, and highly impactful to service companies and end users.

But at its heart, real-time remote monitoring provides us insight that simply isn't available through traditional methods.

Currently, when I return to a site, I have to inspect every monitoring location manually, assess what I find, and capture the data it provides.

But typically, the only data I get is that either there was no rodent activity in this location, or that at some point in time since I was last on site, one or more rodents has been here.

With remote monitoring, I should be able to learn how many individual instances of activity there were, at what time and whether there were patterns in reported activity.

And if I'm really clever, and combine the data from multiple monitoring locations, potentially what direction and route rodents take. At this point I feel the need to make my case for why, whilst snap traps can be used for monitoring, they are at their best when used as part of an approach to control.

Controversial? Well, what does a rodent caught in a traditional snap trap tell us?

The only true insight we gain is that at some point since we were last on site, one rodent, at one point in time, was in that space. We know nothing else; the time, frequency or scale of rodent activity.

In addition, when triggered, the snap trap is entirely useless to us for ongoing monitoring and can provide us with no further details of what's happening on site. By adding a remote monitoring aspect to a snap trap, we get a bit more information when that single rodent was trapped. But the device then remains equally useless for us until reset.

For this reason, monitoring devices that use some form of activity sensor, (motion camera, heat sensing, pressure pads, etc), and deliver ongoing rodent monitoring throughout the period between site visits, would be my choice of remote monitoring tool.

With that precious information in the form of data, I'm armed to get straight into managing the problem, days and potentially weeks, before I would go through traditional methods.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

So far, all good. But then we face the elephant in the room. How do we charge for these solutions?

Manufacturers are still wrestling with their pricing models for their systems.

Typically, we see:

- A high device cost and no (or a low) ongoing cost
- A low device cost and high ongoing cost (typically a subscription)
- A mix of the two.

Challenging, whichever way.

I believe the fundamental issue service companies have here is that, typically, we sell our service in

"Traditional methods for monitoring rodent activity can be labour intensive, reactive, unfocussed, inefficient and inconclusive."

terms of time spent on site.

Whilst I could talk passionately about how what we actually do is provide a service, reducing risk to end-users and their customers through managing public health pests, the brutal truth is that most service companies quote and then charge by the hour.

How much to service that site? One technician, eight site visits per year, two hours to get around the site each time. That'll be [insert number here] per month, please. And our customers get the comfort of seeing our van in their carpark for a few hours on each occasion.

To truly enjoy the efficiency savings remote monitoring can give us, and help us deliver an improved service, we'll have to flip that on its head.

If not, we'll end up saying "We're going to charge you the same, possibly more, but you'll see us for less time each visit". That ain't going to cut it.

No, to get our customers to see the benefits to them, we're going to have to shift the conversation from hours on site to value delivered.

From vans seen in carparks to 24/7 protection. From reactive blanket treatments, to proactive, insight driven, targeted action.

That requires effort. But the benefits? All of the above. To be clear, not for one moment do I believe remote monitoring technology replaces technicians. It's simply a tool. But a tool that can help trained professionals do their job better and more efficiently.

To use a crude analogy: rather than a security guard in a peaked cap walking the site once every six weeks to have a look what's happening, they're armed with information delivered through a high-tech, data-delivering, 24/7 surveillance security system, which allows them to spend their time doing what they do best.

Easy? No. Simple to bolt on to the standard service company business model? Unlikely.

But if we as an industry can find a way to truly embrace remote monitoring and the benefits it brings, we can super-charge the pace of our journey to show the value of professional pest management and its crucial role in maintaining public health for us all.



GUIDANCE

BPCA has created guidance for using wildlife cameras in customer premises. We outline how to stay ethical, legal and professional.
bPCA.org.uk/g/camera

BEHAVIOURAL RESISTANCE IN RATS AND MICE

Why do some rodents stroll past bait stations as if they're invisible? Why do others avoid traps altogether, or develop a taste for one formulation but reject another? Are we tackling super-resistant rodents, or is there a problem with our approach? Behavioural resistance is one of those topics that gets everyone in pest management talking.



Niall Gallagher **PPC**
BPCA



Alex Wade **AW**
BASf



Chloe Smith **CS**
Pest Solutions



Dr Matt Davies **MD**
Killgerm and RRAG

PPC Let's start at the beginning. What exactly do we mean by behavioural resistance?

AW It's any abnormal behaviour that helps a rodent survive where others don't. It might be inherited or learned, but whether it's trap shyness, bait aversion or even a preference for a certain food, if it gives them an edge, that's behavioural resistance. It's basically their superpower.

MD Exactly. We've seen cereal aversion in mice, neophobia in rats, learned aversion where parents pass on avoidance behaviours, and even trap shyness. They're all part of the same picture.

CS For me, it's very real. In Glasgow city centre, I see bait box avoidance, trap avoidance and bait preference all the time. It's not just stubborn rodents; it's populations that won't touch what you're putting down.

PPC How do you tell the difference between resistance and a problem with our technique?

CS My first big shock was moving from rural sites to city centre ones. For me, wax blocks worked great in the countryside. In the city? Nothing. That taught me fast that it wasn't the bait, it was the mice. These days, I ask clients for hatches into voids and ceilings so I can bait where they're really moving. Loose bait hidden away often works better than shiny boxes in plain sight.

AW Technology helps, too. With cameras and remote sensors, you can actually see a mouse approach a box, check it out with its whiskers, then choose to walk away. That's gold. Before, we only had footprints in dust to go on.

PPC Has this always been around, or is it something new?

CS And don't forget DIY treatments. Tenants using weak shop poisons are leaving behind survivors that won't touch anything by the time a professional arrives.

PPC Is some of what we call resistance just bad pest control?

CS Sometimes. You need to keep changing things up. Different baits, different traps. I've had success with tunnel-style traps where mice just run through, and even with unusual lures like crisps or cheese sauce when that's what they're already eating. You have to experiment.

AW Exactly. Rats spend very little time feeding. We keep targeting that sliver of behaviour, but there's a whole pie chart of other behaviours. If they won't eat, use their locomotion, grooming or nesting habits against them. Find the kryptonite to their superpower.

PPC With glue boards restricted and anticoagulants under review, are we losing too many tools?



Humans and rats share a long, intertwined history of both conflict and cohabitation, which has shaped both species. The Dance of the Rats, attributed to Ferdinand van Kessel (17th century). Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



"If the kitchen has inches of grease, the mice aren't going in your bait boxes, they've already got a buffet." - Chloe Smith

AW Any reduction in options makes control harder. Glue boards were niche, but losing enough tools makes the puzzle trickier. Restrictions on anticoagulants would be another blow.

MD That's why information is critical. Use cameras, monitoring and resistance testing. The more we know, the better we can adapt.

PPC How important is client cooperation?

CS Essential. If a kitchen is filthy, the mice don't need your bait. Some sites act on recommendations and get results. Others ignore them, and the problems never end. Talk to the cleaners. They usually know more about what's happening day to day than the managers.

PPC Are new plastic boxes really a problem?

CS I'll often leave an old box in place if it works. Why risk a shiny new one putting them off?

AW Research backs that up. Rodents engage less with brand-new plastic than with natural materials. It's not one single thing; there's spatial neophobia, object neophobia, even food neophobia. Lumping it all together hides the detail.

CS And bait preferences can vary postcode by postcode. In Glasgow, one area takes one paste, another prefers a different brand. You can't assume one bait will work everywhere.

PPC Should we be teaching behavioural resistance earlier in training?

CS Absolutely. I learned fast because I was thrown into city centre work. But if you're rural, you might not see it for years. Awareness should start from day one.

AW My mantra is simple: if this, then that. If plastic fails, try wood. If cereal bait is ignored, use protein. Observe, adapt, repeat.

Don't just blame resistance and keep doing the same thing.

PPC What does the future look like?

AW Every generation thinks it's the end when tools are taken away. But pests don't vanish, and neither will we. We'll adapt. We always do.

MD And remember, information is power. Use the resources out there. RRAG guidance, CRRU testing, CPD opportunities. Stay informed and share data.

CS And don't forget the basics. Proofing and

Key takeaways

- Behavioural resistance includes avoidance and preferences that help rodents survive
- Technology like cameras and sensors give us new insights into behaviour
- DIY treatments and incomplete control can fuel resistance
- Proofing, hygiene and housekeeping are as important as bait choice
- Adaptation is key: observe behaviours and adjust methods accordingly.

hygiene aren't optional extras; they're the foundation of control.

PPC Final advice for pest professionals?

MD Information is key. Gather evidence, stay updated, and act on what you know.

CS Follow recommendations: proofing and hygiene make all the difference.

AW Behavioural resistance is real, but it's not an excuse. Observe, monitor, and take away the rodent's advantage.



LIKE THIS ARTICLE? WATCH IT BACK

The whole debate is recorded and available on our website! Watch the whole 50-minute discussion there.

bpca.org.uk/cpd-videos (login required)

"Behavioural resistance is a superpower, but every superhero has a kryptonite."
- Alex Wade

MEET THE MEMBER ASSESSOR

FLIPPING THE SCRIPT WITH IX5 PEST CONTROL



In a twist for this issue of PPC magazine, we gave a member the reins. Matt O'Donnell is a Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner and Director of iX5 Environmental Services, based in Northampton. Instead of meeting the member, Matt is going to talk us through his experience of meeting a BPCA assessor.

When iX5 Pest Control joined BPCA, we knew membership came with standards, support and accountability.

In October 2024, we had our first annual BPCA assessment – a physical, on-site visit from our assessor, Kristian Nettleship.

As someone who's spent years carrying out audits and inspections as a Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner, I've seen both sides of the clipboard.

Here's how the day went, what we learned and why I think every member should see the assessment as a chance to grow.

And you might even pick up some tips for your own assessment when it comes.

Getting ready

The date was agreed well in advance, and we were told the visit would include:

- A review of our systems, processes and paperwork
- A site visit to a customer
- An inspection of our chemical store and a vehicle.

Knowing how helpful good preparation is for auditors, I made sure everything was ready; our company procedures manual, staff handbook, training records, visit reports, insurance certificates and waste transfer notes were all printed and waiting when Kristian arrived.

We started with coffee and a chat about the business. Kristian took the time to understand our company ethos, how we operate and our goals for the year ahead.

Then we worked through the documentation. Because it was all neatly prepared, the process was quick and efficient, and we could focus on meaningful discussion rather than chasing bits of paper.

Kristian offered a few practical suggestions for

improvement, which we've already put into action.

He gave us guidance on quarterly waste return requirements, and some great advice on Environmental Risk Assessments. We discussed office health and safety, and talked him through things like our fire risk assessment.



On-site and in the field

Next, we looked around our warehouse and chemical store. Having a commercial premises with clear storage areas made it straightforward to demonstrate how we keep things organised. Kristian checked a van too, making sure everything was safe and compliant.

Our maximum carrying list was being stored behind the sun visor at the time, but he advised that we display it on the bulk head behind the driver, with UK manufacturer numbers on.

We had some great discussions about waste management, safety and good practice. What I appreciated most was Kristian's open approach.

He was firm on the essentials but willing to talk through different ways of doing things.

"Healthy debate is vital in professional auditing, and this visit was a perfect example of that."

For the site visit, I offered him a choice: a new commercial contract or a domestic rat job that had been giving us a challenge.

He chose the rat job, saying most assessments focus on tidy commercial sites. It turned out to be a good call: a partially-boarded domestic property with signs of significant rat activity. It was useful to get Kristian's second opinion, and he enjoyed seeing a real-life scenario too.

The outcome

By the end of the day, I felt we'd both benefited. Kristian saw a genuine picture of how we work, and I gained valuable insights and reassurance about our systems. Most importantly - we passed!

My top tips for other members

- **Be prepared** - Have your documentation ready. It saves time and shows professionalism.
- **Lead the visit** - It's your business, so set the pace. The assessor will tell you if they need more detail.
- **Ask questions** - If you don't agree with something, talk it through. Assessors welcome constructive discussion.
- **See it as support, not scrutiny** - BPCA wants members to succeed. The process helps confirm your compliance and highlight where to improve.
- **Choose an interesting site** - Don't just show your easiest job. Use the visit as an opportunity to get feedback.
- **Enjoy it** - Assessments are a chance to learn, share ideas and strengthen your business.

Final thoughts

Our BPCA assessment was a positive and worthwhile experience.

It confirmed that our systems are strong, highlighted a few small areas to tighten up and gave us a fresh perspective on our work.

If you approach the assessment with openness, organisation and curiosity, you'll come away stronger for it.

The assessment is there to help you prove that your business meets the standard, but BPCA wants members to succeed. Remember that.

MEET THE MEMBER

FROM CYBERSECURITY TO PEST CONTROL: HOW CURIOSITY AND COMMUNITY SHAPED SQUEAK-A-BOO



Somerset-based pest controller Matthew Arnold, owner of Squeak-a-boo Pest Control, talked to PPC magazine about career changes, award recognition and stumbling upon opportunities.

A winding path to pest control

Matthew's path into pest management is anything but typical. "I've kind of stumbled from one thing to another all my life," he admits with a laugh. "I've fallen into some amazing jobs completely by accident."

He left school and took his first job in a battery factory, welding together industrial cells for mining equipment. "It was very hands-on," he says. "We were literally making huge sticks of AA batteries to fit down boreholes."

When an offer came to train as a lecturer, Matthew found himself weighing that against two other options: gas engineering or the army. "I sort of joined the army by mistake," he jokes. "And then totally by accident somehow passed the selection tests for the Intelligence Corps."

That "mistake" led to a decade-long military career, full of specialist intelligence roles that honed his problem-solving instincts. "It was never the plan, but I loved it," he recalls. "You learn how to think strategically; how to analyse, assess risk, and work under pressure. All skills that, funny enough, translate well to pest control."

From military intelligence to digital defence

When his first child was born, Matthew decided to leave the forces, but not before another twist of fate. "I had a phone call that turned out to be a job interview, though I didn't realise it at the time," he laughs.

"I was sitting in the car with a laptop, Googling the company while they were asking me questions." The impromptu interview landed him a consulting role, and soon he was immersed in the world of cybersecurity.

Over the next decade, Matthew's projects spanned defence and finance, from nuclear submarine systems to digital banking apps.

"One of my first jobs was doing cybersecurity accreditation for submarines," he says. "Then I moved into financial services, where I helped design the security accreditation criteria for Open Banking - you know when your app lets you see all your other bank accounts in one place? That was my team."

The work was high-stakes and highly technical, blending engineering discipline with creative thinking.

"It taught me to look at systems; not just machines, but human behaviour, too," he says. "If you understand how a system functions, you can figure out where to intervene. That's the same logic I use now in pest control."

Systems, strategy - and rodents

Matthew's fascination with systems thinking even predates his pest career. He recalls watching a TED Talk about eradicating mosquitoes:

"The speaker described mosquito control as a system - breeding, feeding, transmitting - and said if you can break one part of that cycle, you solve the problem. That clicked for me. It's the same thinking behind cybersecurity or counterterrorism work. And as it turns out, pest management."

That analytical mindset now shapes Squeak-a-boo's approach. "A rat has to nest, feed, and travel," he explains.

"If I can disrupt one of those needs - deny it food, block its access, or break its breeding cycle - I've broken the system. The subject matter changes, but the method stays the same."

From hobby to livelihood

Matthew's pivot to pest control began innocently enough, during the Covid-19 lockdowns of 2020.

"I was shooting to help neighbours with rats and rabbits, just doing it for free," he says.

"I started watching BPCA videos, reading

guides, and thought, maybe I should do the RSPH Level 2 Award."

Bit by bit, the hobby became a side hustle. "I set up a website and started charging a bit, just to cover costs," he says.

"Then it snowballed. I'd reduced my consulting work to three days a week, but was still working seven days overall. One morning I woke up and thought, that's it: I'm going all in."

By early 2024, Matthew had left consulting entirely to run Squeak-a-boo full-time. Since then, he's picked up two major awards: Sole Trader of the Year at the National Pest Awards and the Somerset Business Start-up of the Year.

"It's been wild," he says. "But I'm proud of how far it's come."

When asked what he attributes part of that success to, Matt says it's all about how you write your entry.

"Alex Wade said once: write your award entries like you're American," he says. "We're British, so we're not good at saying we're great at something, we're a bit too reserved. But if you can back up your entry with evidence, like quotes, data, pictures, that's what gets noticed."

That philosophy paid off. "At the Somerset Business Awards, people were saying they'd applied every year for the awards and never won. I just told them: it's part luck; it's mostly how you tell your story."

Empathy as a tool of the trade

Despite his background in analysis and risk, Matthew sees pest control as fundamentally a people business. "It's a crisis industry," he says. "When someone calls, they're often scared; they just want to hear that everything's going to be OK."

He's had calls at two in the morning from anxious customers worried about rats in the

"From welding batteries to securing nuclear systems to chasing rats across Somerset, my career's been defined by one trait: curiosity."

walls. "You've got to be part problem-solver, part therapist," he says. "Sometimes people don't need you to act - they just need reassurance."

That empathy extends beyond clients to the pest control community itself.

"When I started, I'd ring pest controllers across the country just for advice," he says. "They'd talk for an hour because most of us work alone. That sense of openness and community is something special in this trade."

Innovation on the ground

Matthew is quick to apply his problem-solving instincts to fieldwork too. One unusual technique he's become known for is vacuuming out ground wasp nests instead of relying solely on chemical treatments.

"I wasn't sure how safe it was to put insecticide into the soil," he says. "So I started vacuuming the nests out first. You get most of the wasps before you even open the nest, and sometimes you don't need chemicals at all."

He laughs that it came from uncertainty, not genius. "I just didn't know the 'proper' way, so I tried something new. Now I see more people doing it. That's how this industry evolves - through shared ideas and a bit of curiosity."

Being a sole trader gives him the flexibility to experiment and to look after his customers. "If someone's struggling, maybe elderly or on low income, I can adapt. Split payments, discounts, or even just free advice. You have that freedom to be decent."

Matthew also donates a percentage of Squeak-a-boo's turnover to Somerset's Village Agents Crisis Fund, which supports vulnerable residents facing hardship.

"You see people really struggling," he says. "Sometimes they just need someone to fix a small problem, or to show them how to manage something. It feels right to help."



Looking ahead

Although Squeak-a-boo is currently a one-man operation, Matthew's plans are expanding. "I'd like to grow to maybe five people," he says. "I want to build something to hand over to my children one day. I want this to outlast me."

He's also keen to keep contributing to the profession. As a member of BPCA's WildWise group, Matthew has written guidance on night



Squeak-a-boo Pest Management won the Start Up of the Year Award at the Somerset Business Awards 2025.

shooting and other technical topics.

"It's not about taking control; it's about supporting the industry," he says. "BPCA does a lot behind the scenes that people don't see; engaging with the government, setting standards, producing technical content. I couldn't have started without their resources, so it feels right to give something back."

From welding batteries to securing nuclear systems to chasing rats across Somerset, Matthew's career has been defined by one trait: curiosity. "I've always been the kind of person who says yes and figures it out later," he says.

"That's served me pretty well so far."

For him, pest control brings together everything he's learned - investigation, systems thinking, technical problem-solving, and empathy. "If you can break the cycle, you can fix the problem," he says. "That's true for rats, cybersecurity, or life in general."

Want to be interviewed by PPC?

We're always looking for members to tell their stories in PPC magazine. If you have an interesting journey to share, let us know!

hello@bpca.org.uk



SUSTAINABILITY IS NOT A SIDE SHOW

IT'S SUPER FUEL FOR GROWTH



In this article, Chris Cagienard, Managing Director of Pest Solutions, shares how sustainability has transformed his business and why small pest management companies can benefit just as much as large corporations from embracing greener practices.

SPEED VIEW

- Sustainability isn't just for big corporations – smaller pest management companies can benefit too
- Embedding sustainability led to cost savings, innovation and stronger customer loyalty
- The Willow Review shows 67% of SMEs cut costs and 52% gained new customers through sustainable practices
- BPCA's ESG Working Group is creating a Sustainability Toolkit to help members take their first steps.

The topic of sustainability can be daunting for small and medium-sized businesses.

It's easy to see it as something that belongs to big corporates with dedicated budgets and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) or CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) targets.

But what if sustainable practices were just as accessible for small businesses? What if they could add profit to the bottom line, create a trading advantage and help drive growth?

That's exactly what the recent government-backed Willow Review shows: sustainability isn't just good for the planet; it's good for business.

At Pest Solutions, we decided to take our first steps by joining the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce's Step Up to Net Zero programme. I've since become a mentor on that scheme and an active contributor to the Circular Glasgow network, both of which helped inform the Willow Review.

When I looked at the report's findings, they matched almost perfectly with what we'd discovered in our own business.

We started from a position of not even understanding the language. We didn't know

what the circular economy was. Fast forward 18 months, and we've become champions of sustainable and circular practices, having felt the transformative benefits first-hand.

Small steps grew into big ideas. What started as a side project is now a cornerstone of our business plan. Sustainability has made Pest Solutions stronger, more innovative and more profitable.

We were even proud to see our work through the Chamber of Commerce reflected in the findings of the Willow Review and the ACTS Toolkits produced by Circular Glasgow. We didn't think a small Glasgow-based business like ours could make a significant impact – but we did.

The Willow Review

The Willow Review spotlights how sustainability drives profitability, innovation and long-term growth for small businesses.

It was co-chaired by Ministers Gareth Thomas and Sarah Jones, alongside Nick Stace OBE and Michelle Ovens CBE, supported by a steering board of industry leaders, government representatives and sustainability experts.

The message is clear: sustainability isn't just for the big players. Small and micro businesses

"We started from a position of not even understanding the language. Now we're champions of sustainable and circular practices."

can and should get involved – not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it makes sound business sense.

Financial benefits of sustainability

SMEs make up 99% of UK businesses and contribute roughly half of the UK's business-related carbon emissions. That means sustainability is both an environmental necessity and a commercial opportunity.

The Willow Review found that 67% of SMEs achieved cost savings through reduced operational costs, and we've experienced that ourselves. Looking at everything we do through a sustainability lens forced us to ask: why do we do it that way? When the answer was "because that's how we've always done it," it was time for change.

That questioning mindset led to real innovation. We found better, more efficient, more responsible ways of doing things. Sustainability became a filter through which every decision must pass – and it's paying off.

Revenue growth

The Willow Review also reported that **52% of SMEs** attracted new customers, and **35%** saw improved customer loyalty thanks to sustainable practices.

We've found the same. Our customer retention rate is over 98%, but clients have embraced our sustainability work because it helps them meet their own environmental goals. It makes us a more attractive supplier and deepens relationships.

Sharing our sustainability journey also shows the character of our business – that we care about doing things right. It's helped us win new customers, attract top people and retain great staff. Our culture is stronger, and we're growing faster and more efficiently as a result.

Innovation and recognition

When we first started out, it was easy to think that, as a small pest management company, there were limits to what we could achieve. But once we began, we realised the only real limit was our mindset.

Just because something has always been done a certain way doesn't mean it has to stay that way.

That attitude has led to several transformative innovations – reducing costs, improving profitability and enhancing service for customers.

Our efforts have been recognised too. We were proud winners of the 2024 Glasgow Business Awards Net Zero Achievement and the 2025 National Pest Awards Sustainability Initiative of the Year. Three of our sustainability projects were also finalists at the 2025 GBA Awards for innovation, sustainable development and digital technology.

It just goes to show – small businesses can make a big impact.

Breaking down barriers

The Willow Review also highlighted that **59% of SMEs** see cost as a major barrier to sustainability, alongside knowledge gaps and a lack of trusted information.

That's where collaboration comes in. Through the BPCA ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) Working Group, we're helping to break down those barriers for members.

The group is creating a Sustainability Toolkit with practical guidance and real-life case studies to help pest management companies take their first steps – and share their successes along the way.

Watch this space for more resources from BPCA to help members unlock the same benefits that transformed our business.

YOUR IDEAS FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY

If you'd like to get involved, join the ESG Working Group by emailing hello@bpca.org.uk.

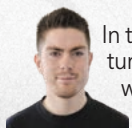


Full Willow Report available
at willowreview.com/report



"Looking at everything we do through the lens of sustainability forced us to ask why we did things the way we did. 'Because that's how we've always done it' just wasn't good enough."

WORKING IN COLLABORATION WITH YOUR EHO



In this article, Fergal Flynn, environmental health graduate turned pest controller, shares how to get on the same wavelength as your Environmental Health Officer and turn potential friction into smooth, professional teamwork.

Why EHOs think the way they do

Before I studied environmental health, I thought “EHO” was one job. In reality, you’ll meet different officers with different remits. Some focus on food safety in cafés, takeaways and factories.

Others are housing officers who deal with HMOs and hazards in rented homes. Environmental protection officers handle nuisances. Those worlds overlap at the edges, yet each has its own priorities, codes and pressures.

EHOs want the same outcome we do – safe, pest-free environments. They just have to get there via a rules-based route. That means evidence, proportionality and a clear line from risk to action. Remember the context they are working in:

- Politics (think councillors and managers)
- Limited resources (small teams and not enough hours)
- Variable pest knowledge - most degrees touch pest control briefly, so many officers learn on the job.

See those pressures, and your approach to communication immediately improves. Be the expert who makes their decisions easier, not the person who adds noise.

The enforcement toolkit I look out for

When you know the common notices and orders, you can predict the next step and help your client without drama.

The golden rule is graduated enforcement: start informal, escalate only if needed. When you mirror that logic in your reports and conversations, you sound like part of the solution.

What happens on the housing side

Domestic rodent jobs often start with a neighbour complaint: “The rats are coming from next door’s bird feeders” is a classic. The first step is informal: talk to both parties, agree on simple controls and give a time window. Only if that fails do notices land.

If you’re guiding your client, coach them to try contact at sensible times, keep notes and stay courteous. That aligns with how officers will triage the matter.

If a notice is served and ignored, councils may do works in default. Organise the job and bill the owner.

Building trust with your local team can lead to that work coming your way. We have done everything from drain tracing and proofing to house clearances under those arrangements.

Tool	Used by	Typical trigger	What it means
Informal advice	Any EHO	Early stage, manageable issues	A chat or letter with advice and timescales.
Hygiene improvement notice	Food safety	Poor procedures or standards	Requires specific improvements within set time.
Remedial action notice	Food safety/building	Structural or equipment defects	Fix fabric or kit to remove a risk.
Hygiene emergency prohibition notice (HEPN)	Food safety	Imminent risk to health	Immediate closure. Must be confirmed by a court order within days.
Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, s4	Housing/environmental protection	Rats or mice present or likely to be present	“Rid the land” within a set period – often 14 days. Works in default possible.
Local environmental protection powers	Environmental protection	Accumulations, refuse, animal-related nuisances	Remove cause, ongoing monitoring.

Works in default explained

- A notice is served with a compliance period. For example, 14 days under Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, s4
- If the person responsible does not comply, the council can instruct a contractor to complete the work
- Costs are recovered from the owner
- Some councils use this often, some rarely. It depends on policy and budgets.

If you are reliable, credible and keep officers informed from start to finish, you are far more likely to get the call when work in default is on the table.

Burden of proof and why it matters

Criminal enforcement needs proof beyond reasonable doubt, so EHOs take their own photos and notes even if your evidence is strong. Help them get gold standard evidence:

- Photograph the approach, the context and the detail
- Capture both the defect and its consequence, for example, gnawing at a door and droppings in the same frame
- When filming, pan from the entrance to the area of concern so a stranger could follow it
- Offer to take a photo on the officer's device from your carefully chosen angle.

Good documentation speeds decisions and protects everyone if a case goes to court.

Speak their language

Officers respond well when we frame our work as reasonable, proportionate and risk-based with a graduated approach. That is their world. Likewise, when an EHO talks about HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) or "Safer Food, Better Business," I know exactly what they expect to see in a small kitchen.

If a new café rings, I will ask whether they use Safer Food, Better Business and pitch my advice to that baseline. It tells me how much they know and stops me overloading them.

Food premises are a team sport

In commercial kitchens, I always remember that pest control is only one part of the operator's food safety management. They may be using a template like Safer Food, Better Business or a bespoke HACCP plan in a factory. I make my reports simple and aligned with their documentation:

- Clear findings linked to specific hazards
- Specific controls with owners and dates
- Monitoring or verification steps that fit their routine.

When working on farms, expect overlap with feed and agricultural compliance. I have not worked closely with feed officers, yet the principle holds. Tailor controls to the risks of the site and document them coherently.

The case study that sums it up

Mr and Mrs Smith have just moved in. They are seeing rats at the fence line. A peek over shows bird feeders and an open compost heap next door. Here is how a textbook case runs:

1. **Informal** – the Smiths are encouraged to speak to Mrs Jones next door.
2. **Initial visit** – the officer visits both, explains cause and control, and sets a reasonable timeframe.
3. **Notice** – if needed, a PDPA s4 notice requires proofing and changes to feeding/compost within the period stated.
4. **Follow up** – if the work is done, great. If not, works in default or prosecution may follow.

Where do I add value? I assist the Smiths in preparing clear notes and photos, and I write an evidence-led report with practical recommendations. Additionally, I keep the officer informed about the progress of agreed actions. Everyone's job becomes easier, and the activity stops faster.

The simple reporting habits that win trust

I changed my whole approach after my EHO placement. These habits make a visible difference:

Keep it tight

Short, plain English sentences and bullet points are truly helpful.

Separate what you know from what you suspect

Evidence first, hypotheses second.

Recommend, do not rant

No emotive language, no accusations without proof.

Get a second pair of eyes

A colleague review can spot unclear or missing steps.

Close the loop

If work is done, tell the officer with a two-line update and a photo. Do that and you will be invited to help shape the enforcement plan, not just react to it.

What not to do

- Do not fire every neighbour dispute at the council and instead coach clients through informal steps first
- Do not bury an officer in a thirty-page data dump (they need clarity, not volume)
- Do not talk down to anyone – you're the specialist, yet you are part of a system
- Do not send half-finished reports.

A practical checklist you can lift and use

Before you get the EHO involved

- ☑ Confirm the client has tried reasonable

informal contact with any third party

- ☑ Gather photos that show cause and effect in context
- ☑ Prepare a one-page summary with findings, risks and proportionate controls.

When you are collaborating

- ☑ Agree who is doing what by when and how you will report progress
- ☑ Offer practical help to capture evidence on the officer's device
- ☑ Use the words reasonable, proportionate and risk-based when setting out options.

After work is complete

- ☑ Send a brief completion note with before and after photos
- ☑ Record lessons learned in your template for next time.

Pricing for collaboration without losing your shirt

Working closely with EHOs takes admin time (more notes, more photos, more liaisons). Be open with clients.

We price projects to reflect that full service: investigation, treatment, proofing and liaison through to sign off. Most people will happily pay a bit more for a package that actually resolves the problem and keeps regulators satisfied. When you collaborate well:

- Problems are resolved faster because the steps are sequenced and proportionate
 - Your credibility rises when officers learn you are accurate, calm and reliable
 - Referrals happen, and while they cannot endorse you, works in default and local familiarity are very real
 - Officers save time when your information is usable, meaning their caseload moves quickly.
- We're united in public health. By understanding each other, speaking clearly, and sharing clean evidence, everyone wins – especially the customer who wants pests gone and business open.

Resources

If you want to dig deeper, these are the documents I keep bookmarked:

- **Food Law Code of Practice**
The spine of food enforcement.
- **Your council's enforcement policy** Tells you how they escalate and whether they use works in default.
- **Safer food, better business**
A practical baseline for small food businesses.
- **Housing health and safety guidance**
Useful when pests intersect with damp, disrepair and new duties such as Awaab's Law.
- **Prevention of Damage by Pests Act**
What a section 4 notice really requires.

Use those to shape both your advice and your paperwork. It helps you speak their language and sound like you belong in the conversation.

WE CAN'T LOSE WORKING DOGS FOR PEST CONTROL FROM OUR TOOLKITS



Ed Cook from Evergreen Rabbit Control in Hampshire examines the unintended consequences of professional rabbit control being lumped in with hunting for sport, championing the role working dogs play in protecting public health, wildlife management and conservation.

CODE

BPCA has created a Code of Best Practice on Working Dogs. bpca.org.uk/codes

When the British public thinks of hunting with dogs, they often picture someone better off than themselves, with a name they can't pronounce, perched on a horse in a red coat worth more than their car. In their heads, they're on a jolly, harassing a fox with a pack of pooches across the countryside. For many, it's an easy figure to dislike. That image has been reinforced by the press, poor behaviour by some hunters and misguided animal rights groups alike - some justified, others less so.

But working dogs are a far more complex and diverse subject than many people think, especially in pest control, wildlife management, health and safety, invasive species removal and conservation. People forget that the purpose of a dog—or reshaped wolf, if you like—has always been to aid man. That's how they evolved. Different breeds were created for different jobs.

Some may say dogs aren't needed in the "modern world", but no control method will ever replace a dog in our industry. Their ability is literally ingrained in their genetics. To work with such talent as a much-loved colleague is a privilege.

Times are changing

With pressure from animal rights groups and Labour's commitment to close loopholes in the

Hunting Act 2004 (which allowed rabbit and rat hunting with dogs), rabbit control with dogs may be restricted in England, as it recently was in Scotland.

This legislation was aimed at fox hunting, mink hunting and hare coursing - or those who openly flout the law. Sadly, it also affects those of us who need dogs for real pest control: protecting crops, health and safety, and conservation. There is no replacement for a dog's ability, and that's truly concerning.

While many dogs never get to fulfil their original role or live an active life, plenty in our industry are living the dream. Dogs can be used for a wide range of purposes, often more efficiently than traps, chemicals, guns or thermal imaging. In pest control, they're used to find bed bugs, search for stoats and ferrets as non-native species on islands, and catch rats in places where other methods don't work.

The dogs love their jobs. They're versatile, effective across endless tasks and environments, and always keen for more.

Working dogs in rabbit control

For full-time rabbit controllers like us, dogs are the most important tool of the trade, with ferrets a close second. Our jobs vary hugely across the UK. One day we might be in a garden, the

next on a large farm, then on to a high-security compound or even an island for conservation, crop protection or sea defence preservation. In every case, we rely heavily on our dogs' ability to do the job safely, efficiently and without chemicals. Hunting with dogs should be seen as environmentally friendly.

A dog working alongside us during ferreting tells us which holes are inhabited by "marking" them. Rabbits often appear in unexpected places; commercial areas, vents, wall cavities, ducts and even radiators. Sometimes we need a dog to catch and retrieve a rabbit to hand so it can't escape.

The efficiency of marking and catching shouldn't be underestimated. What can be done in one day with good dogs could take three days without them. That's before considering time-sensitive sites and health and safety. The rabbit that would have been caught and retrieved by dogs is the one that matters, especially on eradication contracts. And as we all know, time is money.

Terriers and spaniels are needed to flush rabbits from vegetation once bolted by ferrets, to drive them into nets, or to be shot or taken by a hawk. We often use terriers to chase rabbits from ducts, drainage pipes, under buildings or from the epicormic growth of trees. In areas

where firearms are prohibited for safety, we use dogs for lamping—shining a light at a rabbit so the dog can pursue, catch and retrieve it live for dispatch. In some cases, this is more effective than shooting.

These are just a few examples. Our dogs are true game changers. They've streamlined our business for 25 years and remain the core of what we do.

The future of working dogs in pest management

Personally, I'd like to see a licensing scheme rather than losing access to working dogs. Some may argue "you can't license cruelty", but I believe licensed hunters who pass tests as handlers, with each dog registered for its skill set, would remove bad practice and improve standards for everyone.

For those who understand that all animals need management, and that even "cute" pests like rabbits must be controlled, it's fascinating to watch dogs work alongside ferrets, nets and even birds of prey. Those who are offended normally shout the loudest, but most spectators soon learn that no rabbits are ripped apart. We work as a controlled team, the rabbits are dispatched quickly, and the meat is used.

As with any method, there are good and bad practices. Done properly, the use of dogs for pest control is far more humane than poisoning, letting cats roam, or causing a deer road accident and driving on without a thought. "Cruelty" isn't scientific - it's a perception, often based on opinion rather than fact.

I'd like to think I'm pragmatic. Some of my methods may look "sporting", but we've fine-tuned them into professional tools. While I'm pro hunting with dogs when it's done correctly, I believe licensing or at least proper training, welfare standards and respect for quarry is the way forward. We should champion our dogs' abilities and achievements, not restrict them.

There are good and bad people in every trade. Legislation seldom changes the behaviour of those already working illegally. Why should my trade suffer because of others? It's offensive to be lumped under the same umbrella as those who don't care. The time has come for accredited hunters before it's too late.

After all, I don't like horses. The only red jacket I ever owned was an Adidas one. And I'm certainly not well spoken.

PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS?

Do you have a different opinion from Ed's, or would you like to add something? Feel strongly about another pest-related issue? PPC is the voice of professional pest management. Send us your thoughts, and we might print them in the next issue! hello@bpca.org.uk

USING DOGS FOR PEST MANAGEMENT IN SCOTLAND

In Scotland, pest management professionals may use dogs to control wild mammals above ground, but there are strict conditions on how this can be done.

Under the Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Act 2023, professionals can use no more than two dogs to flush or search for wild mammals above ground. This may only be done for specific purposes, including:

- preventing damage to livestock, woodland or crops
- preventing the spread of disease
- protecting human health.

If more than two dogs are required, you must apply for a licence from NatureScot before carrying out any activity.

Understanding how the legislation applies

When using dogs to hunt or flush wild mammals that are in the open, the Hunting with Dogs (HWD) Act applies. In this situation, lethal control can only be achieved through the use of a firearm or a bird of prey, and dispatch must be carried out as soon as possible to remain compliant.

However, if dogs are used to drive a mammal into a net, once the animal is captured and in your possession, the HWD Act no longer applies.

At this stage, the relevant legislation becomes the Wild Mammal Protection Act 1996 and the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

Under these laws, humane dispatch by hand or by other lawful methods is acceptable, provided that it does not cause unnecessary suffering or breach welfare requirements. It is important to note that once a mammal such as a rabbit is captured

in a net, it is considered to be in the possession of the individual. Releasing it would contravene Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which prohibits the release of non-native species into the wild.

Controlling invasive non-native species

The Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024 also defines when control may apply to invasive or non-native species. The legislation states that: "Invasive non-native species" means a species which is either: included on the Scottish list of species of special concern, OR

not native to the area in which the control takes place and having, or likely to have, a significant adverse impact on biodiversity, the environment, social or economic interests, or human or animal health.

This means that where a mammal is recognised as non-native and has an adverse impact on biodiversity or the environment, control using dogs may fall within permitted purposes. In practical terms, this may include rabbits, which are non-native and widely recognised as highly damaging to habitats and agricultural land.

As always, pest management professionals must ensure any use of dogs or other control methods is lawful, proportionate, and humane, taking into account all relevant animal welfare and environmental legislation.

If in doubt, seek legal guidance or contact NatureScot for further clarification before proceeding.

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enquiries@nature.scot





BUILDING CONFIDENCE FROM DAY ONE: ONBOARDING SUCCESS WITH BPCA

START

> ENROLMENT

> CORE KNOWLEDGE

> PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

In this article, Karen Dawes, BPCA's Training and Development Manager, shares how a well-structured onboarding programme can transform a new recruit's first six months and highlights one learner's journey through BPCA's new Onboarding Framework.

When someone new joins the pest management industry, their first few months can make or break their confidence. A lot of what we do as employers and trainers in those early days sets the tone for the rest of their career.

At BPCA, we've spent years supporting technicians at every level, and one thing we hear time and again is how difficult it can be to bring a new person up to speed safely, consistently and professionally. It's expensive, it's time-consuming, and if the structure isn't right, important learning can slip through the cracks.



That's why we developed the BPCA Onboarding Framework: a practical, step-by-step structure to help members introduce new starters to the world of pest management while supporting them towards their Level 2 Award or Certificate in Pest Management. It's been designed to make onboarding consistent, competency-based and – above all – supportive.

But rather than talk theory, I want to share what it looks like in practice.

A NEW TECHNICIAN'S JOURNEY

Earlier this year, Richard Bradbury joined Hinton Pest Control, a BPCA member company, which enrolled him in our all-inclusive Onboarding Programme. From day one, Richard showed enthusiasm and a real curiosity for the job;

qualities that make a huge difference in those first few weeks.

We met him for his initial review in May 2025. Even at that early stage, he had already begun his online training modules and was using every opportunity to put theory into practice. Supported by his mentors, Liz and Shaun, and backed by a company that gave him time in the working day to study, Richard progressed quickly through the programme. He told us:

"The amount of support I had through the onboarding process and from my team was unbeatable. Support from BPCA was excellent."

That support, from both employer and Association, is what we want the framework to achieve: a learning environment where new technicians feel guided, not thrown in at the deep end.

"It's been designed to make onboarding consistent, competency-based and – above all – supportive."

REAL-WORLD LEARNING

Through the programme, Richard built up a diverse portfolio of experiences. Each task was linked to the twelve practical learning outcomes set out in the framework, ensuring a balance between health and safety, pest identification, and real-world treatment work.

His reflections show just how varied a pest technician's day can be. One week, he was

carrying out burrow baiting and learning how to use grain bait effectively; the next, he was treating carpet moths and calculating the correct dilution rate for an insecticide in a pressure sprayer.

At a wasp treatment, he carried out a loft survey. He checked carefully for bats and naked flames before beginning, showing that safety and environmental awareness had already become second nature.

A visit to a poultry farm presented another challenge: disease control measures were in place due to avian flu restrictions, meaning Richard had to follow strict biosecurity rules and use PPE correctly. It's this kind of hands-on learning that embeds professional habits for life.

And then there was his now-famous "hornet incident", the kind of story every pest professional remembers from their early days.

"Hornet mayhem!" he wrote in his reflection. "I attended a job that had been treated for wasp activity, but when we got there it turned out to be European hornets. I wasn't kitted up, and my first mistake was tapping the wall they were in. The wall burst open, hornets rushed out and I got stung in the face! But I got the customer to safety, called for backup, and we handled it as a team. I learnt two things: never tap walls and always wear a bee suit, even during investigations."

That kind of practical learning is exactly what the onboarding journey is designed to encourage (always wear your PPE, folks!).

ASSESSMENT AND GROWTH

Before sitting his Level 2 examination, Richard completed an interim assessment with his BPCA assessor. It's a chance to discuss what's been learned so far, identify any gaps, and build confidence before the exam.

The assessor noted that Richard was



> ASSESSMENTS

> PORTFOLIO AND REVIEW

> CERTIFICATION

confident in areas such as legislation, pest biology and behaviour, and could clearly explain integrated pest management (IPM) principles.

They explored subjects where he had less hands-on experience, such as black ants, pharaoh ants, clustering flies, and feral mammals, and he received guidance on strengthening his knowledge in those areas. The assessor's report summed it up perfectly:

"Richard is clearly committed to becoming a professional pest controller. He has submitted many thoughtful reflections, completed all of his online learning modules, and reports feeling well supported by his employer and colleagues."

In August 2025, just three months after starting the programme, Richard passed both his Level 2 Award in Rodent Management and his Level 2 Award in Pest Management on his first attempt.

CONFIDENCE THROUGH COMPETENCE

Success in pest management isn't just about passing exams; it's about building competence and confidence hand in hand. Richard told us:

"I feel so much more confident now. I've learned how to do the job properly and safely. The support I had made all the difference."

That confidence is what we want every new technician to feel when they finish onboarding. It means they're not only capable of handling a variety of pests, from rodents and insects to moles and birds, but also equipped to work safely, communicate effectively with clients, and think critically about their decisions on site.

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS FOR EVERY COMPANY

Every BPCA member operates differently, so we designed the onboarding programme to be flexible.

For companies that already have strong in-house training, the framework-only option provides free access to the structure and assessment tools. Others can choose from training-only, managed onboarding, or our all-inclusive package, which combines online, tutor-led and practical training with the Level 2 qualification.

All versions use the same robust framework, which includes:

- Access to BPCA's online learning and development platform
- Practical field-based learning outcomes
- Review meetings and progress checks
- Independent assessments to ensure readiness for the Level 2 exam.

Whichever route a company chooses, the goal is the same: to help recruits build the knowledge, skills and behaviours of a professional pest technician.

"...take a look at the BPCA Onboarding Framework. It could be the start of a journey just like Richard's. One that turns curiosity into competence, and enthusiasm into expertise."

THE POWER OF SUPPORT

The strongest theme running through Richard's experience was support.

His company gave him time and encouragement to complete his studies. His mentors offered guidance in the field. And BPCA provided the structure, resources and expertise to tie it all together.

When asked if he felt more committed to his company because of that encouragement, his answer was immediate: "Yes, 100%. The support I had was unbeatable."

That's the heart of onboarding done well. It doesn't just teach the job - it builds loyalty, engagement and pride in the profession.

A PROVEN PATHWAY

For us at BPCA, Richard's story is just one of many. Since launching the Onboarding Framework, we've seen new technicians across the UK grow in confidence, pass their exams and go on to successful careers with member companies.

And it's not just about individual achievement. When companies invest in structured onboarding, they raise the bar for the whole industry. Every technician who feels supported, trained and valued becomes another ambassador for professionalism in pest management.

So if you're welcoming a recruit soon, take a look at the BPCA Onboarding Framework. It could be the start of a journey just like Richard's. One that turns curiosity into competence, and enthusiasm into expertise.

LEARN MORE

Find out more about the BPCA Onboarding Programmes at bpca.org.uk/onboarding or call us on +44 (0) 1332 225 113



Level 2 Pest Management Award - 5-day classroom course and exam

Develop the skills and knowledge you require as a public health pest control technician, covering techniques for managing rats, mice, wasps, flies, bed bugs and more. Study for your RSPH Level 2 Award in Pest Management with a 5-day classroom course and six weeks' worth of online learning with BPCA. Prepare to be a public health pest control technician with this industry-standard qualification delivered by experts in pest management. The perfect door into the pest management industry!

Pssst!

Non-member 'open day'
Special online event for pest management companies that are NOT members of BPCA. Learn about membership, meet Board members and ask questions. Learn more and book at bpca.org.uk/secret

Your local pest event.

Now a full day event!

Bulk booking discounts

We now offer discounts on bulk bookings for our online Level 2 Award in Pest Management course, for both members and non-members: 0-2 licences – standard price; 3-9 licences – 20% discount; 10+ licences – 40% discount. Exam costs remain the same. Contact the training team to find out more.

Terms and conditions

All costs are members only and exclude VAT. Non-member prices are available at bpca.org.uk/training

Venue details are provisional and may change – please check the BPCA website before booking.

BPCA reserves the right to cancel a programme if insufficient bookings have been received.

Delegates will be offered an alternative date or a full refund of the programme fee if a programme is cancelled. BPCA will not be liable for any costs incurred by the delegates.



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Exams for Level 2, Certified Field Biologist, Certified Technical Inspector and Fumigation Unit 1.

Date	Location
09/12/2025	Leigh, Manchester
12/12/2025	Stafford
20/01/2026	Glasgow
30/01/2026	Milton Keynes
17/02/2026	Peterborough
20/02/2026	Stafford
27/03/2026	TBC

Event/ course name	From (£)	Date	Location
WEBINAR: Getting to grips with gulls 🔒	Members Only	07/01/2026	Online
KEYNOTE WEBINAR: Pest equipment maintenance - getting ready for insect season 🔒	Members Only	14/01/2026	Online
Starting out in pest control	132.00	19/01/2026	Online
Glasgow Training Forum	Free for everyone	21/01/2026	Glasgow
Hands-on practical pest management	250.00	24/01/2026	Stafford
Level 2 Award in Pest Management (residential)	1,165.00	25-30/01/2026	Milton Keynes
DIGITAL FORUM 37: your online pest event	Free for everyone	28/01/2026	Online
DEBATE WEBINAR: Is upselling and offering additional services the key to growth? 🔒	Members Only	04/02/2026	Online
Becoming a Field Biologist/Technical Inspector	132.00	06/02/2026	Online
Certificate in Bird Management	216.00	12/02/2026	Online
Hands-on practical pest management	250.00	14/02/2026	Stafford
Level 2 Award in Pest Management (residential)	1,165.00	14-20/02/2026	Stafford
Peterborough Training Forum	Free for everyone	18/02/2026	Peterborough
Hands-on practical pest management	250.00	24/02/2026	Derby
KEYNOTE WEBINAR: Social media and digital skills bootcamp for pest professionals 🔒	Members Only	25/02/2026	Online
GUEST WEBINAR: Cracking cockroach control - species, habits and treatment success 🔒	Members Only	04/03/2026	Online
Safe use of Aluminium Phosphide	358.00	05-06/03/2026	Southwick
Starting out in pest control	132.00	09/03/2026	Online
 The pest management show	Free for everyone	18-19/03/2026	ExCeL, London
Level 2 Award in Pest Management (residential)	1,165.00	23-27/03/2026	TBC
Non-member open evening- Learn about BPCA membership	Free for everyone	27/03/2026	Online
MEET THE MEMBER WEBINAR: Matt O'Donnell from iX5 🔒	Members Only	01/04/2026	Online
Safe use of Fumigants	1,081.00	13-16/04/2026	Southwick
Chester Training Forum	Free for everyone	15/04/2026	Chester
Hands-on practical pest management	250.00	18/04/2026	Stafford

WATCH NOW


Take a behind the scenes look at BPCA's residential Level 2 Award in Pest Management training course.



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- Simple to use:

Catch =  No Catch = 

For information on how the Power of  products can enhance your rodent control service and solve problems at your accounts, contact your local Pest Control Distributor or visit www.bellsensing.com.

