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PPC113

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Friends and critters taking up residence over winter



PROFESSIONAL PEST CONTROLLER NOVEMBER 2023

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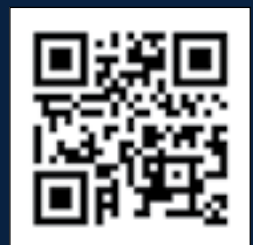
Introducing a legend between the sheets



**For pest controllers seeking a scientific, rapid
response to potential bed bug infestations**

TruDetxTM is the very first scientifically proven tool to detect low levels of bed bug infestations within 5 minutes.

- Over 92% scientific accuracy
- Immediate bed bug detection
- Detects hard to find pests
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- Easy to use, minimal training needed



[†]Ko, Alexander & Choe, Dong-Hwan. Development of a lateral flow test for bed bug detection. Scientific Reports, Article 13376 (2020)

*Presence or absence of bed bug residues can only be determined from thoroughly sampled surfaces. TruDetx Bed Bug Rapid Test can detect residues left from a previous infestation that is no longer active but as old as 90 days.

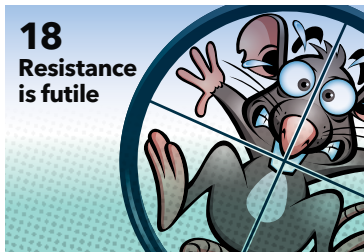
Documentation: TruDetx Bed Bug Rapid Test is over 90% effective at detecting residues from common bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*^{*}) and tropical bed bugs (*Cimex hemipterus*). Bat bugs are related insects and can produce a positive reading as can residues from black carpet beetles, (*Attagenus unicolor*).

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BPCA
British Pest Control Association
4a Mallard Way, Pride Park, Derby DE24 8GX
bpca.org.uk
01332 294 288
enquiry@bpca.org.uk

 twitter.com/britpestcontrol

 facebook.com/britishpestcontrol

 bpca.org.uk/linkedin

 youtube.com/BPCAvideo

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Editors
Scott Johnstone, Dee Ward-Thompson
hello@bpca.org.uk

Content team
Ian Andrew, Natalie Bungay, Karen Dawes, Lauren Day, Harrison Ditheridge, Rachel Eyre, Niall Fairbrother, Sarah Holland, John Horsley, Katrina Jellyman, Kristian Nettleship, Lorraine Norton, Clare Penn, Beth Reed, Kathryn Shaw

Advertising
sales@bpca.org.uk

Design
Davidson IGD linkedin.com/in/davidsonigd

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PPC has been printed using carbon-balanced papers, showing our commitment to choosing a sustainable supply chain and reducing our carbon footprint with each edition.



BPCA Registered CPD points
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/cpd-quiz

EDITORIAL

A great volunteer

When all is said and done, BPCA is just a group of pest control businesses volunteering their time, money and effort to make the sector better for us all.

Over 60 people from as many companies give their time generously to BPCA's Board, committees or working groups. They make sure pest management is represented by real pest management businesses.

Most of BPCA's volunteers are from SMEs, and they fit in their volunteer work around running successful small businesses.

In October, we lost one of our greatest volunteers.

Phil Halpin was BPCA President from January 2019 to May 2022, during one of the most challenging times the sector and Association had ever experienced.

A tribute to Phil is on page 5 but, as condolences flood in, there's a single overriding theme: Phil was a great volunteer.

Phil was a longstanding member of the Servicing committee and stepped up to the chair role despite being outside his comfort zone. He had the ability to bring together different viewpoints and find consensus among peers.

That ability to find common ground continued to serve him well as President. Phil was a dedicated volunteer, always eager to learn more and develop his skills for the Association.

Phil believed that when we all pulled in the same direction, we could achieve great things despite being a tiny sector.

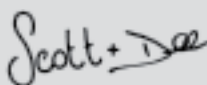
In his last column in PPC magazine, he wrote: "Being on the Board has made me think more strategically about my own business ... I've never left a Board meeting or a BPCA Forum without feeling at least a little inspired to make a change in my own company.

"So, if you can, get in those rooms. Have those conversations. Enjoy those sandwiches. Come to an event or volunteer for a committee. You won't regret it. We've got plenty to celebrate together."

Without volunteers like Phil, there would be no BPCA.

So, to all our volunteers - thank you for your work and commitment. And for those members who have always thought about donating some of your time, please get in touch and find out how you can be involved.

And to Phil – thank you for your leadership. You really were a great volunteer.



Scott and Dee

PPC editors
hello@bpca.org.uk

BPCA MOURNS THE PASSING OF FORMER PRESIDENT PHIL HALPIN

BPCA is saddened to report that our former president, Phil Halpin, has passed away after a prolonged illness.

Longtime member and BPCA volunteer, Phil was the chair of the Servicing committee from 2015 to 2019 and was instrumental in developing the BPCA Registered CPD scheme.

Philip led the Association through the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring guidance was quickly made available to the pest control community. Under his leadership, BPCA secured critical worker status in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

BPCA president, Chris Cagienard, said: "Phil served most of his time as President during the Covid pandemic. This meant Phil was deprived of many opportunities to get out and physically meet members.

"However, this was also when the Staff team and Executive Board did more to support and help our sector than in any time preceding.

"Phil led the Association through our first digital-only exhibition with PestExtra during lockdowns, which won the TAF Award for Best Event.

"He spoke passionately at BPCA's 80th Anniversary Event in Westminster Palace, sharing the historic success of the Association and the vital role pest professionals play in society.

"His support was the reason I chose to stand as vice-president and then president of BPCA."

A part of our team and the BPCA community

BPCA operations manager and company secretary Lorraine Norton said: "Phil was a real gentleman and an absolute pleasure to work with. He was popular amongst his colleagues on the Board and members generally.

"He was a great Chair of the Board and spokesperson for BPCA, rarely seen without a smile, even when things weren't going to plan.

"He was calm, considered, supportive, motivated, committed and went above and beyond in his volunteer role.

"Phil always spoke of his family so fondly, and he was committed to professionalism and the mission and values of BPCA – and a hard worker, both for BPCA and, I have no doubt, in his own business.

"He was positive throughout his journey. I'll miss him very much."

Contributions to the Association

- Winner of the BPCA Special Contribution Award 2023
- Immediate Past President (May 22 - Oct 23)
- BPCA President (Jan 19 - May 22)
- BPCA Vice President (Jun 17 – Jan 22)
- BPCA Board Member (Jun 15 – Oct 23)
- BPCA Servicing Committee Chair (Jun 15 – Jan 19).

If you would like to share your condolences or memories of Phil, please send them to hello@bpc.org.uk



CYCLING FOR MIND: ADAM TAKES ON 4,500 MILES!

An employee of BPCA member, Pelsis Group, cycled 4,500 miles around the UK mainland

coastline to raise money for mental health charity, Mind. Adam Sims took on the challenge following his wife of 35 years, Christina Sims, developing a serious mental health condition three years ago.

Adam raised an amazing £9,802 for charity with this challenge.

Adam said: "Christina's illness came right out of the blue. It really hit home how illnesses like this can be completely unexpected.



"We are fortunate that Christina is now doing better, in part thanks to the brilliant support we have received from Mind. That is why I wanted to do this challenge to give back and raise funds so others who go through what we did are able to be supported as well.

"I'm already extremely grateful for all the support and donations I've received from friends, colleagues and the general public."

FATHER-DAUGHTER DUO COMPLETE CHARITY TREK FOR ALZHEIMERS SOCIETY



Former health and safety manager, Iain Whatley and his daughter, Susan Doughty, completed the Alzheimer's Society Trek 26 in memory of family lost to various forms of dementia.

The trek took place in Brixham in Devon on 9 September and the pair walked in memory of Iain's mother, Reta, his father-in-law John and his wife's uncle, Frank.

Iain commented: "Together with my daughter Susan, we completed the 26-mile journey around the exhausting, extremely demanding, but picturesque hills of south Devon.

"It was an extremely tiring and demanding adventure on one of the hottest days of the year. The superbly organised event seemed to have raised in excess of £280k, with 800 participants, which is incredible."

Anyone wishing to donate to Iain's fundraising efforts can visit

[justgiving.com/fundraising/justgiving.com/fundraising/iain-whatley](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/justgiving.com/fundraising/iain-whatley)

POLL SHOWS SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTMENT

A new survey for the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) has found that the majority of the public (85%) said there must be sufficient funding for public health workers, so they don't become burnt out.

The survey findings, which were carried out for the RSPH by Yonder, were released as part of Public Health Workforce Week (2-6 October 2023).

The vast majority of the public (83%) said that there should be a greater focus in the UK on tackling the causes of poor health, with 81% reporting that the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of public health.

More than three in four people (78%) said that public health should be a priority for the next UK Government. 70% said they were concerned about the health of future generations if there

isn't greater investment in public health.

The survey found strong public support for investing in the public health workforce:

- 5% said that there must be sufficient funding for public health workers so they are not burnt out
- Two in three (67%) said that public health workers are undervalued in society
- 82% said that the public health workforce is crucial to safeguarding the nation's health
- 72% said that a long-term workforce plan is needed for those working in public health
- 70% said they were concerned about the health of future generations if there isn't greater investment in public health
- Half of the public (52%) have a good understanding of what the public health workforce does.



LODI UK HOSTS SECOND ADVENTURE NETWORKING EVENT

On 28 September, Lodi UK took to the trees of Cannock Chase for the second instalment of Adventure Networking.

An adrenaline-fuelled morning of GoApe took place, with attendees navigating 1,500m of mid-air crossings, challenging tree climbs, free-fall Tarzan swings and thrilling zip lines!

Matt Towler, UK Business Development Manager at Lodi UK, remarked: "This one

was a little bit more hair-raising than we expected. However everyone got stuck in, swinging through the forest and finishing the day covered in mud – the sign of an awesome event!"

Want to get involved? If you're interested in attending one of the events and would like to register your interest, contact the Lodi UK team on 01384 404 242 or sales@lodi-uk.com

WIN: TAKE PART IN THE FUTURE OF PEST MANAGEMENT SURVEY



BPCA seeks pest professionals and business owners in the UK to feed into our 'Future of pest management' research project.

The information you provide will be used to help protect your toolkit, set our direction and improve our services.

This survey will only take around 20 minutes to complete. As well as helping to protect your sector, you'll be in with a chance of winning a brand-new iPad Air.

For more information and to complete the survey, visit bPCA.org.uk/future

HELP US PROTECT YOUR TOOLKIT!

BPCA
British Pest Control Association

BASF ANNOUNCES PHASEOUT OF INSECTICIDE PRODUCTS

Pest control solutions manufacturer, BASF, has announced that its popular insecticide products, Goliath® Gel and Formidor®, will be withdrawn, with the last sales in March 2024 and last use on 24 September 2024.

The phaseout comes as a result of a European-wide withdrawal of the active substance fipronil under the European Biocidal Products Regulation (Reg. EU 528/2012).

All biocidal products containing fipronil in Europe will be affected following this decision. This affects BASF products Goliath Gel, used for cockroach

control, and Formidor, used for ant control. These will not be available to purchase on the UK market after March 2024.

Laurence Barnard, Country Business Manager for BASF's Professional & Specialty Solutions, commented: "We are proud to have supported the pest control industry for more than 20 years by providing these popular fipronil-based products, but unfortunately, we won't be continuing with them."

The last sale date of Goliath Gel and Formidor will be 28 March 2024 and the last use is 24 September 2024.



PROVEN PROFESSIONAL PROOFING

METEX NORDISK TX11
The Only UK Rat Blockers with WRC & VA Approval!

WRC **VA**

BPCA
British Pest Control Association
MEMBER

SEE HOW

METEX Ask Your Stockist!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hello PPC –

Pest controllers are going to need all the help they can get when new rules for ‘in and around buildings’ come into play (particularly for farms).

Will the following be covered?

- Silage stacks (wrapped) and clamps
- Dutch barns open, possibly on all sides, for stored hay and straw
- Hay and straw stacks (farms lose a lot of bales through strings being damaged)
- Livestock sheds.

Farms will need to do far more in the way of preventative measures like:

- Trimming and spraying all growth around buildings, and the rest of the farmyards
- Repairing water leaks
- Cleaning grain stores throughout the year, not just once before harvest
- Proofing and maintaining grain stores.

With pest controllers having their arsenal of products reduced yet again, I think it’s now time to only allow baits to be used by professionals.

The general public and farmers should not be allowed to purchase or use any products to control rodents or insects. Misuse of these products by the general public, farmers and gamekeepers is a constant issue and is probably where most of the traces found in birds of prey stem from.

You shouldn’t be able to walk into a hardware shop and purchase products without qualifications or knowledge of using them. When attending domestic jobs, you find piles of bait on the ground outside. Even mouse traps are set and just left outside.

It can’t go on any longer.

Regards –

Darren Monk, pest control technician

THE EDITOR’S REPLY

Hi Darren –

Thanks for your email. You raise some really great points.

Regarding pests on farms, I’ll reach out to colleagues and CRRU to see if we can get some new guidance in place.

Regarding amateur rodenticide users, we share your concerns. It would be better if only professionals could access biocides; all our advice encourages people to get a professional pest controller.

In reality, the UK government has little interest in licensing pest controllers or stopping the DIY market. Their argument will always be that there needs to be an alternative to professional services.

Personally, I’d also be concerned about how viable a ‘professional-only’ market would be for biocides in the UK. Registering an active ingredient and a product in the UK post-Brexit is incredibly expensive (about the same price as access to the whole EU). My concern is that professionals would be left with even fewer options.

I believe there will always be an amateur/DIY pest control market in the UK, like all other trades. However, there may be a time when biocides are restricted further.

Our focus, as an industry, needs to be to make our standards as high as possible, so that when restrictions come, we can lobby for exemption for pest professionals.

All the best –

Scott Johnstone, Editor, PPC magazine

CRRU UK RESPONSE

Bromadiolone and difenacoum baits will be available for use in ‘open areas’ and at ‘waste dumps’ until the end of 2024. The CRRU Best Practice Work Group will work with HSE to resolve all outstanding questions about definitions, in particular what is a ‘building’ within the ‘in and around buildings’ use scenario, so that clear advice can be given to users. This will be done as soon as possible and certainly long before products are withdrawn from these two uses. Dr Alan Buckle, Chair, CRRU UK

NOVEL APPROACH TO PEST CONTROL



Colin Smith, former Rentokil employee, has written a semi-biographical novel about his time in pest control. Now published by Amazon as an e-book, hardback and paperback, *The Accidental Expert*

follows Frank Linley, Colin’s alter ego.

Colin says: “Rentokil was a wonderful company to work for and many funny things happened on-the-job. I wanted to record these events for posterity, as they were so funny and it would be a pity if they were forgotten.

“Most of it is true with a degree of artistic licence; it also includes unique technical case histories which were never reported. I think pest control experts will find them interesting reading!”

A short excerpt from the first chapter:

With that, Frank walked to the forecourt and climbed into the limousine, and within the hour he was being driven through the private entrance into the grounds of Buckingham Palace.

As he exited the car he could hear what seemed to be the constant blast of a shotgun. As he got closer he realised that the noise was coming from behind a row of tall shrubs and, as he walked round them, there, standing in front of him was the Duke of Edinburgh, who was systematically shooting at the earth mounds which covered the pristine lawn.

“Come on, you little b*****ds! Show your faces and let me get you!” he shouted. He heard Frank behind him, turned and said “look what these f*****g rats have done to the lawn!”

“I think they are moles, Sir”, said Frank.

“Moles? Moles? What do you mean, they are rats and anyway, who are you?”

The Palace Aid who was standing next to Frank, whispered “He’s from SGS Ltd Sir”.

“Ah!” said the Duke “An expert eh? That’s what we need ‘round here. Moles you say? Well they all look the same to me. Better come inside and see what the buggers are doing in there.”

They walked together through a side door into the breakfast room next to the main kitchen. Frank was astonished to see Her Royal Highness The Queen, standing on a chair also holding a well-used and smoking 12 bore shotgun.

Frank had never been in the presence of Royalty before and was unsure what to do. He decided on a deep bow and, during the downward bend, said “Your Majesty”.

As he was doing this, the Queen let out a high pitched scream. “Eek. There’s another one!” and fired one of the barrels.

BPCA MEMBERS SCRATCHING THAT BED BUG NEWS ITCH

October was a bumper month for bed bugs; not only was BPCA inundated with media requests for information, so were our members.

Beaver Pest Control took part in a televised interview on Sky News, leading to a Sky News article on the same topic.

Landguard Pest Control featured in *The Times* with a bed bug detection dog service, Newcastle City Council appeared in the local *Chronicle*, and Rentokil’s call-out statistics have been all over the national press.

Xeric Ltd, an associate member, explained the benefits of heat treatment to *Lincolnshire Live*, and PestCure showed the *Daily Mirror* “the worst infestation they’ve ever seen”.



And we’re sure there are plenty more out there that we haven’t spotted.

BPCA featured in over 50 news interviews and

articles during the media frenzy, always highlighting the need for professional pest control and BPCA members in particular.

We were all guilty of rolling our eyes a little at the seemingly media-driven panic, there’s no denying that the bed bug news hype was hugely beneficial. It showed the importance of professional pest control and was a boon to BPCA

member companies, with increased calls during that month.

Thanks to all who appeared in the news (whether listed here or not), helped with enquiries or took calls for information from the public. Great work, all round!

PESTFIX OFFERS IK SPRAYERS

PestFix is adding the IK Sprayers brand to its range, with the intention of offering high quality solutions without the accompanying price tag.



This international brand is heralded globally as the leader in spraying technology. Already well known in industrial, construction and automotive industries, the IK brand is working with PestFix to bring products to the pest management industry.

The manufacturer of these sprayers comes with an important track record, backed by more than 60 years of experience and work in compliance with the ISO 9001 standard, accredited by external auditors in periodic reviews.

PestFix commented, "We've also added some top quality entry level sprayers. Not all pest professionals take on the same areas of work, so by including these to our range we provide the option for operatives to explore new areas of pest management without significant initial investment.

"We will still carry the well known Gloria and Birchmeier brands, but can now be confident that our range now matches our ethos of being an "inclusive supplier."

FLOCK OFF BIRD CONTROL TO FEATURE AT PESTEX 2024

The Flock Off system harnesses the power of science with cutting-edge electromagnetic technology to offer an intelligent, humane, and eco-friendly approach to avian management, says US-based business Flock Off.

The system disrupts the natural magnetic orientation of birds without causing them harm. Birds have an innate sense of the Earth's magnetic field, which helps guide them during navigation.

By emitting carefully calibrated electromagnetic signals, this device interferes with the birds' magnetic perception, disorienting them and discouraging them from inhabiting treated areas.

You can find out more about Flock Off on stand 20 at PestEx 2024 in London pestex.org/register



TRUDET X - THE FIRST RAPID TEST FOR BED BUGS

TruDetx Bed Bug Rapid Test is a new detection device from Envu that allows pest control professionals to identify even low-level infestations with over 90% accuracy, delivering results on-site within five minutes.

While the technology is new to the bed bug control market, the underlying lateral flow test concept has been in use for some time, as seen with Covid-19 self-tests.

TruDetx utilises an environmental collection swab, allowing pest control operators to swab areas where bed bugs are likely to lodge, such as mattresses, chairs, and sofas.

After collecting the residue, the operator seals the swab, breaks the seal, and adds four drops of the liquid to the sample. Results are available in five minutes, with a positive outcome indicated by the presence of two lines, similar to the Covid-19 self-test.

TruDetx is used for the detection of a possible bed bug infestation. One test can be used on five rooms for those potential larger infestations.

The test should be used to sample areas where bed bugs hide (mattress seams, headboards, bed legs, baseboards, bedside cabinets, etc). Ensure these areas are swabbed thoroughly to collect any bed bug residues.



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NATIONAL POETRY DAY WINNER

In the spirit of National Poetry Day this year, we decided to do a little competition. We asked our social media followers to write their best pest poems and submit them to us, with the promise that it would be published in PPC113 and the winner would receive a £25 gift voucher.

We had some brilliant entries, but the winner is... Anna Mollins! Anna's pestie take on Christmas classic 'A visit from St Nicholas', which we've printed here, is perfect for the upcoming season and gave the BPCA Staff team a chuckle. Well done, Anna!

And a special shout out to the team at Graham Pest Control, who all got in the spirit and sent in their poems.

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house,
many creatures were stirring, not only the mouse.

The squirrels were snoring so sweetly and snug,
wrapped up with their tails in that old rolled up rug.

There were moths all a-flutter trying to find their true love,
but distracted by Christmas lights twinkling above.

The woolly bears climbing up the sides of the walls,
weren't the kind of bears the children put on their list at all.

The foxes were carolling just down the street,
but a choir made of vixens just an ear piercing screech.

It isn't just Santa who's busy on Christmas night,
the bed bugs enjoy feasting on their hosts out of sight.

But don't worry dear reader as before the end of the day,
this home gets a visit from a member of the BPCA.

Their IPM strategy they put together with skill,
deals with all of the problems with a reasonable bill.

They will visit again when it's the end of the year,
as a follow up survey gives the house the all clear.

Thus ends this story that started infested,
but ended happy and well, and a little bit festive.



NEW MEMBER BENEFITS: BPCA PARTNERS WITH LOGISTICS UK

BPCA has become an affiliate member of Logistics UK to unlock new vehicle-based member benefits for all member companies. These include:

- Access to online vehicle compliance information
 - Logistics UK fuel solutions
 - Logistics UK recovery
 - Discounted penalty charge notice management service
 - Discounted training
 - Member rates at Logistics UK shop
 - Discounted driver licence checking service
 - Discounted driver medicals
 - Discounted tachograph services
 - Discounted vehicle inspection service (VIS)
- And much, much more.

Logistics UK (formerly Freight Transport Association) supports and represents over 20,000 members.

BPCA members will shortly receive a welcome email directly from Logistics UK with set up instructions.

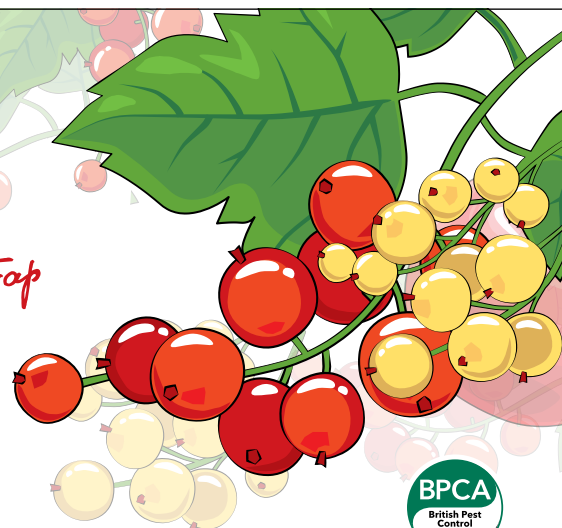
Alternatively, you can set yourself a password now at logistics.org.uk/site-help



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TOP HONOUR FOR INSURER CLIVERTON

Norfolk-based specialist insurance cover provider, Cliverton, has been named Schemes Broker of the Year at a prestigious awards ceremony.

The company, which has a client base of pest controllers, animal-related trades, rural and equestrian businesses, and farms and smallholdings, picked up the hotly-contested title at the UK Broker Awards, hosted by Insurance Age.

Associate Director, Lynne Fisher, said: "We are absolutely delighted. It is the second time we have won this title, which makes it even more gratifying.

"Our success is a testament to all the hard work and commitment of the Cliverton team, and we are enormously grateful."

LOTTERY BOOST TO GREY SQUIRREL FERTILITY CONTROL

The UK Squirrel Accord (UKSA) is excited to announce the Red Squirrel Recovery Network (RSRN) is including an important trial in their exciting new project backed by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



UKSA will work with RSRN, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and The University of York on a focused trial to better understand how grey squirrel fertility control can be effectively delivered at a landscape scale.

They will also collaborate on community engagement activities aimed at raising awareness of fertility control as a method for grey squirrel management.

Read the full story at ppconline.org/ppc-news



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- PestPro Services (Gibraltar) Ltd, Gibraltar
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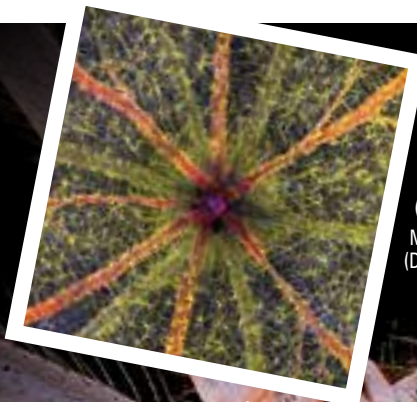
RODENT OPTIC NERVE HEAD WINS PHOTO MICROSCOPY COMPETITION

Nikon Instruments Inc has unveiled the winners of the 49th Annual Nikon Small World Photomicrography Competition.

This year's first place prize was awarded to Hassanain Qambari, assisted by Jayden Dickson of the Lions Eye Institute, for his vivid image of a rodent optic nerve head showing astrocytes (yellow), contractile proteins (red), and retinal vasculature (green).

Some other interesting images were a mouse embryo, a cuckoo wasp, carpenter bee head and antennae, and the underside of a cellar spider.

You can view all the winners and read about the competition at nikonsmallworld.com

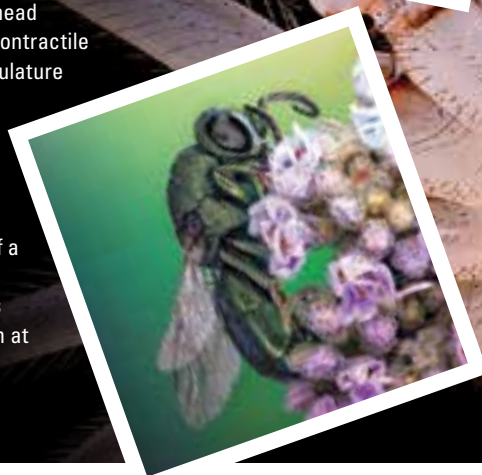


Top: Rodent optic nerve (Hassanain Qambari and Jayden Dickson)

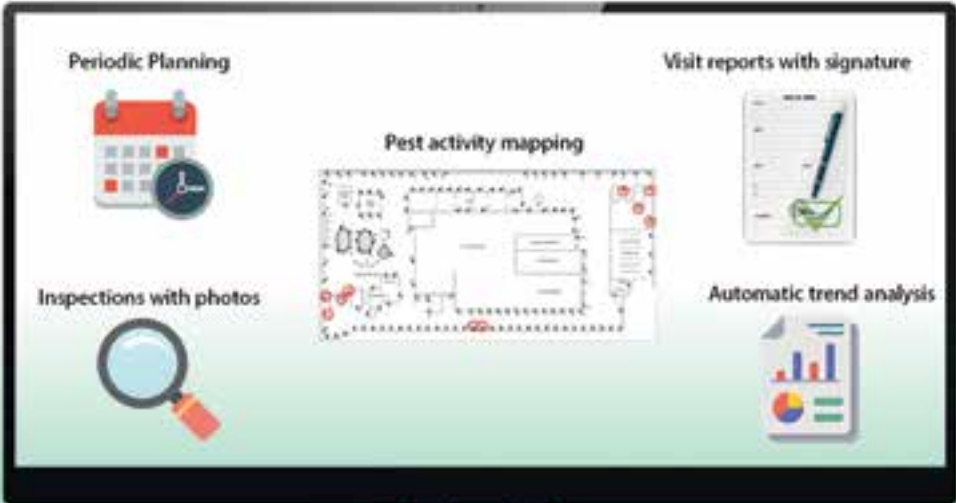
Lower left: Cuckoo wasp (Sherif Abdallah Ahmed)

Lower right: Mouse embryo (Dr Grigorii Timin and Dr Michel Milinkovitch)

Main image: Cellar spider (Dr Andrew M Posselt)



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ALOHA! FROM PESTWORLD IN HAWAII



The global professional pest management industry gathered at the Hawaiian Convention Centre, in the fabulous location of Honolulu, for PestWorld 2023.

Running for four days from 17-20 October, PestWorld is organised by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) in the US. PestWorld attracted over 3,000 delegates, 600 of which were exhibitors. This included nearly 400 international delegates from 50 different countries from across the globe including, for the first time, several representatives from Mongolia.

And the next event has already been announced, so make a note: next year's PestWorld is to be held in Denver, Colorado from 22-27 October 2024.

Read the full review, written by Frances McKim, on the website at ppconline.org/ppc-news

APPEAL TO PEST CONTROLLERS FOR FOX RESEARCH SUPPORT

Researchers at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) are looking to increase their network of UK pest controllers who carry out fox control in urban areas: "We're involved in carrying out the UK's annual *Echinococcus multilocularis* surveillance, by assessing its prevalence within the red fox population.



"We're looking at ways to increase our network of fox controllers within the UK, particularly looking at foxes controlled within urban locations.

"We're particularly interested in foxes found in areas such as London, Bristol, Bournemouth and Brighton. There is no charge involved for our collections, and all carcasses are used for a variety of ongoing research projects in the UK."

If you are involved in the control of foxes in the UK and can help, please contact a member of APHA fox survey team:

Paul Cropper (northern England) 07496822408

paul.cropper@apha.gov.uk

Tim Glover (southern England) 07713145682

tim.glover@apha.gov.uk



FIRST LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE IN PEST MANAGEMENT

BPCA has awarded the Level 2 Certificate in Pest Management for the first time ever.

In September, Rhae Lobban, Pest Solutions, was the first pest technician to take the new Level 2 Certificate in Pest Management being offered by BPCA and taught by Paul Westgate.

Rhae passed the course and exclaimed, "Well that's one way to make BPCA history!"

She continued, "Really enjoyed undertaking the first ever BPCA Level 2 Certificate and am honoured to be the first of many to come.

"I'd like to thank Pest Solutions for always investing in their technicians and ensuring we are the best technicians we can be.

"A further thanks to the BPCA's fantastic Clare Penn, and Paul Westgate from Veritas Pest Consultancy, for being such a knowledgeable tutor throughout the course."

Find out more about the Level 2 Certificate (and what makes it different to the Level 2 Award) – contact training@bpca.org.uk

BPCA RULES AMENDED

BPCA's Executive Board has signed off some small amendments to BPCA's rules, which are now available at bpca.org.uk/library (login required).

The changes in the rules are designed to clarify BPCA's existing position, rather than to make any changes to the rights of members or directors.

Contact us for any queries membership@bpca.org.uk



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PESTS IN THE PRESS: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2023

While the coverage figures reflect a strong media presence for BPCA in Q3, this is merely the build-up to the media frenzy ignited in the first week of October after soaring bed bug infestations in Paris. Look out for the Q4 figures in PPC114 for the media blitz that followed!

Activity in Q3:

Rats are not a usual summer topic, but in July, BPCA issued a press release about rats in gardens and emphasised the lack of evidence for home deterrents (eg planting lavender) which have become popular.

Moving into late July and August, we saw a spike in pest-related stories with BPCA's press release urging homes and businesses to watch out for wasp nests, gaining traction across the country. Almost 100 news outlets in Scotland, Wales and across England featured advice from BPCA on wasps.

Articles, picking up on widely-reported, early summer issues with squirrels in Scotland, continued through to September when a 'spike in spider sightings' story from BPCA gained coverage in regional news, with a number of mentions and comments on radio.

But as the month drew to a close, another mini-beast was poised to hit the headlines. In August, the first media enquiries came in from journalists wanting information about bed bugs, followed by two more in September with both iNews and the Sunday Times Magazine contacting

BPCA for information.

Following Mr Macron's speech about the scourge of bed bugs in Paris at the very start of October, BPCA issued a media advisory pack, directing journalists to ask BPCA experts for information – and they did!

At the time of writing, the team has fielded more than 40 enquiries from journalists at major news outlets including BBC News, the Press Association, BBC Radio 4, The Jeremy Vine Show, ITV, Sky News, Channel 5, The Times, The Independent, Mail on Sunday, Bloomberg News, CNBC and GB News, with many making multiple requests for comments, information and interviews.

Our dream team, Natalie Bungay and John Horsley, gave interviews and comments for online, print TV and radio, and were on hand to answer questions and appear live for BPCA.

But sometimes journalists want a more grassroots point of view, and this is where our links with members come in handy. If you would like to be included on our list of media savvy members, for future news article enquiries or the chance to appear in TV or radio interviews, let us know hello@bpca.org.uk

Circulation figures for the various interviews and enquiries about bed bugs are currently being collated and will be included in the next Pests in the Press.

Work with specific titles catering to associated trades continued in Q3 with articles for Facilities Management



TOP 3 HEADLINES

SEPTEMBER SPIKE IN SPIDERS!
Tenby Observer (web)

PEST EXPERTS ISSUE WASP NEST WARNING TO HOUSEHOLDERS
Mansfield Chad

SQUIRRELS – CUTE AND FURRY GARDEN ANIMALS OR A MENACE?
London Business Matters

TOTAL ARTICLES 2023 679

TOTAL CIRCULATION 307,561,850

Journal, Tomorrow's Cleaning, National Craft Butchers, The Field and Environmental Health News.

Looking ahead, BPCA will issue its first guide to pest control for students, to consider which creatures we should really be scared of at Halloween and to highlight simple steps for homeowners to deter rats this winter.

Read all about it!

Spot something in the press? Idea for a press release? Tell us.

hello@bpca.org.uk

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PESTS IN POLITICS: NOVEMBER 2023 WELSH GOVERNMENT CHOOSES RATS OVER PEOPLE

BPCA's lobbying work continues. Stay up-to-date with all things pest in the UK parliament and devolved administrations. PPC helps keep you firmly in the loop.

Welsh glue board open letter and response

As many of you now know, the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 was passed by the Senedd on 27 June 2023 and given Royal Assent on 17 August 2023.

The Act makes the setting of a rodent glue board in Wales a criminal offence, which came into force on 17 October 2023.

The Welsh government Wildlife Team said: "The Wildlife and Countryside Act is enforced by police forces across Wales and from 17 October, any person found guilty of using a glue trap could face imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine."

BPCA did everything within our power to influence this legislation. However, much of our work fell on deaf ears.

We hoped to get an amendment that promised a licensing scheme for professional pest management work, just as we achieved in England.

Despite providing compelling evidence and answering questions in a select committee meeting, our work was disregarded in the committee stage report.

In September, we penned an open letter to the Minister for Rural Affairs ahead of the imminent Welsh glue board ban, and received what we consider an unsatisfactory and dismissive response.

We have published both the letter and response here, in full.

27 September 2023

Dear Lesley Griffiths MS,

As you will be aware, the British Pest Control Association (BPCA) objected to the ban on rodent glue boards in the Agriculture (Wales) Bill which has now received Royal Assent.

We argued for a licensing scheme for pest professionals so our sector could continue to use the only means we had to catch rodents quickly in high-risk areas.

Defra has proved that a workable licensing scheme is possible, and we would have worked with Natural Resources Wales to get a similar scheme in place to protect Welsh citizens and businesses.

Now that the Act is in force, it will have inevitable consequences on businesses in Wales with high-risk food areas being severely challenged to maintain food security and public health.

Ironically, the only business that will likely benefit from the ban will be pest management companies, as it will cost their clients with pest problems considerably more to get premises rodent-free and safe.

We will closely monitor the impact of the ban on our members' clients but the ban on glue boards will inevitably have an adverse effect on animal welfare.

Rodent populations will increase while their food sources remain static leading to greater numbers facing starvation.

The increased use of biocidal products (rodenticides) will result in an inevitable increase in non-target species being poisoned. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) wants us to monitor this closely.

An increase in the use of rodent break-back traps will lead to more rodents suffering from foul catches.

While a rodent caught on a professionally placed glue board typically had a humane death, their futures are far more uncertain with the tools we have left.

I do not believe the citizens of Wales would ever choose to co-exist with rodents. Sadly, however, that will become an increasingly common circumstance for many.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is clear that one of the significant factors in the increase in human lifespan globally is professional pest management. As such we advocate strongly for adequate pest management as we know society thrives and human life is enhanced because of our sector's work.

Your work on this Act has hindered our members' ability to protect Welsh citizens and long term we expect to see more rodent-based pathogens disproportionately harm Welsh people due to increased rodent populations.

If any of the above causes concern, we will be happy to work with the Welsh Government to re-introduce access to rodent glue boards for pest professionals to maintain the public health and food security of the people of Wales.

I hope whenever you read of someone in Wales in hospital because they've contracted Weil's disease, salmonella, listeria, or any of the other nasty pathogens rodents carry, you'll remember the warnings we issued.

And when Welsh citizens rightfully ask why rodent lives were prioritised over theirs, we'll be sure to point to the Welsh government and this poorly thought-out legislation.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Andrew
Chief Executive, British Pest Control Association



12 October 2023

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your letter of 28 September, regarding the ban on the use of glue traps in Wales.

It is undeniable rodents can pose a serious public health risk in spaces that humans occupy. It is also reasonable to assume there are situations that require a rapid solution such as, in hospitals, around the young and otherwise vulnerable, and in any form of food service.

Nevertheless, even in the hands of professional pest controllers, glue traps cannot be considered a humane method of capturing vertebrates.

The Agriculture (Wales) Act consultation highlighted glue traps are used rarely in Wales. Adequate, efficient and more humane forms of pest control are available and in regular use.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd









We want to hear from you

How is the glue trap ban in Wales affecting control on the ground? Send us your thoughts!

hello@bpca.org.uk

FREE CPD EVENTS AND WEBINARS

Event type **Webinar – Members only**  **Local forum** **Virtual forum**


Name	When?	CPD	Sponsor
MANCHESTER	22 November	5	1env + PelGar
Non-pest mammals in the UK	29 November	1	
COSHH for pest control	20 December	1	
Mouse control	10 January '24	1	
DIGITAL 21	31 January	3	Pelsis
7 simple proofs: proofing for rodents part 1	7 February	1	
GLASGOW	14 February	5	Deadline
7 simple proofs: proofing for rodents part 2	6 March	1	
DIGITAL 22	8 March	3	Pelsis
EXCEL, LONDON PestEx - the pest management show	13-14 March		
Best practice update 2024	10 April	1	
DIGITAL 23	17 April	3	Syngenta
Integrated insect management part 1	8 May	1	
MIDLANDS	22 May	5	PestFix

Pssst! 

5pm –
23/11/23

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 bpc.org.uk/secret

Name	When?	CPD	Sponsor
DIGITAL 24	6 June	3	Purean
Integrated insect management part 2	12 June	1	
Integrated insect management part 3	3 July	1	
DIGITAL 25	10 July	3	Purean
Lead generation and marketing	7 August	1	
DIGITAL 26	14 August	3	PestFix
Controlling rats in drains	4 September	1	
BELFAST	18 September	5	1env
Controlling rats in homes	9 October	1	
DIGITAL 27	16 October	3	Envu
Controlling rats in flats and HMOs	13 November	1	
LEEDS	27 November	5	Killgerm
Delivering pest awareness training	4 December	1	
DIGITAL 28	11 December	3	Bell Labs

bpc.org.uk/events

SENDING STAFF TO EVENTS? HERE ARE THE BENEFITS...

We know that your businesses are important and time is money. So we understand when we hear the many reasons for non-attendance. But for every reason you can think of not to send your staff to an event, there are lots of other reasons why you should; reasons that are beneficial to the running of your business.

To retain your staff and grow your business you need to encourage a culture of upskilling and learning among your employees. Show them you value their time and their development.

One way to do this is to encourage them to join in with events; send them to forums, trade shows and register them for webinars.

Build these events into the culture of your business. By enabling your staff to attend conferences, workshops or any business events, you will build brand awareness and inspire your team. It will also create an atmosphere of team-building.

The team members that attend will return with a different work outlook. They'll be motivated, more creative in the way they work, and

willing to implement what they've learned.

They'll meet suppliers showing off new products, innovations and pest control methods. They'll learn from, and network with, others outside your company – sharing knowledge, ideas and best practice.

As much as your own toolbox

talks and team meetings help, they'll only ever learn

from the same pool of people. Learning from others could give them skills and the know-how to tackle difficult sites, which could even save you time and money on future jobs.

We also often have representatives from HSE, food production companies, supermarket chains, biologists – your staff might be sitting next to your next client!

Tell your staff to wear their uniforms, engage with networking and talk to these people – they can help your business grow.

And tell your customers that you are at an event. Let them know your staff are learning and keeping up-to-date with industry and legislation changes, so they can be assured you're providing the best service to them.

If you aren't there, your competitors might be – knowledge is power, so make sure it's your power!

**WE'RE SO BUSY,
WE JUST DON'T
HAVE THE TIME TO
SPARE.**

**IT MEANS
TIME AWAY
FROM WORK!**

**I HAVE A
LAST MINUTE JOB
THAT I CAN'T TURN
DOWN.**

**WHAT'S THE
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INBOX

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ARCHIVE

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SPAM

ASK THE TECHNICAL TEAM

Can I carry glue boards in my van if I cross the border from England to Wales?

In short, yes. We know there are quite a few of you operating between the two borders, so you're understandably worried about potential consequences of being found with glue boards despite being allowed to use them in England.

In Wales, it is now illegal to set a rodent glue board but there is nothing saying you can't carry them. Our recommendation is that you have a 'quarantine' box of glue boards, labelled "for use in England only".

This just helps demonstrate that you are aware of the legislation and, in the event of being stopped by authorities, shows this awareness. And if you have any problems with a situation like this, we'll be happy to help provide guidance.

What does 'in and around buildings' mean? Does it cover silage stacks, Dutch barns, hay and straw stacks, livestock sheds, etc?

We asked CRRU to clarify this: "Bromadiolone and difenacoum baits will be available for use in 'open areas' and at 'waste dumps' until the end of 2024. The CRRU Best Practice Work Group will work with HSE to resolve all outstanding questions about definitions, in particular what is a 'building' within the 'in and around buildings' use scenario, so that clear advice can be given to users. This will be done as soon as possible and certainly long before products are withdrawn from these two uses."

We'll keep you posted!

What should I do with left over pesticides if they're no longer legal to use?

You should 'quarantine' the product with your waste, to make sure it isn't accidentally used, and then arrange for it to be disposed of via a licensed waste contractor. If you're a BPCA member, get in touch and we can point you in the right direction regarding waste contractors and the law around correct disposal of pesticide waste.

What should I do if I think I have behavioural avoidance in a rodent population?

The first thing to remember is that the avoidance is usually due to something specific. It may be a type of box or a particular formulation that rodents do not like. They have learned to avoid it, be it through a bad experience or learning from their fellow rodents. So it is important to discover what it is they are avoiding, specifically, and then change it.

Sometimes, just the colour of a bait box is the problem! It really is fascinating, but just a bit of out-of-the-box thinking (pun intended) can help. You'll need to take certain things away, change what you're using and figure it out through trial and error.

Why are bed bugs all over the news? Are there really more bed bugs from Paris?

It was quite the month for bed bugs in October, wasn't it? Our phones were ringing off the hook with media enquiries after news came out of Paris that authorities were concerned about the number of people claiming to have spotted bed bugs on public transport. It kicked off a whole wave of "French bed bugs are invading" stories and, understandably, the UK public began to worry.

We can't say for certain whether there's been an increase or not. It stands to reason that cases have increased compared to the time during Covid-19 lockdowns, when travel was banned. This could just be cases getting back to pre-2020 levels. Also, this news landed at the tail end of summer, when bed bugs are more active.

So far there have been no confirmed sightings of bed bugs on UK public transport; just the occasional blurry TikTok video. And while members reported an increase in calls during October, this was mostly put down to worry and there didn't appear to be a huge increase in actual bed bugs confirmed.

Of course, with increasing resistance to insecticides and the cost-of-living crisis pushing people to try DIY methods, it's something that's worth keeping an eye on.

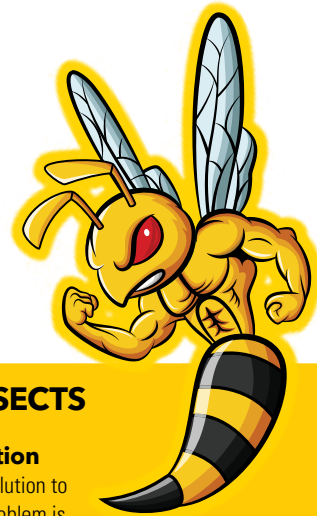
Let us know your thoughts on it though, since you're out there on the front line tackling them! And if you have a tricky bed bug case, don't forget we're here to help – just get in touch.



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!

GAME ON!



THROWING DOWN THE RESISTANCE GAUNTLET



Is resistance our biggest challenge in 2024? Alex Wade, from Wade Environmental, asks, "what's stopping us?"

As 2023 seems to evaporate into a cloud, my mind turns to next year. As far as I can tell from my limited letterbox view of the industry, 2024 is going to see some interesting changes and challenges.

The withdrawal of certain products, and the loss in use patterns, continue to challenge our toolbox. With resistance being reported across the entire UK, we have to sit up and ask ourselves: do we need to develop new strategies to manage the evolving landscape of pests and products?

So, with that in mind, the best philosophy is 'to be forewarned is to be forearmed'.

I will highlight the different resistances in rodents and insects, and give some useful practical tools to try and build strategies to combat them.

METABOLIC RESISTANCE IN INSECTS

Problem

Insects are marvellous in their simultaneous simplicity and complexity. Their circulatory system is nothing more complex than a tube pumping jelly from abdomen to head and letting it wash back down the length of the body.

It's easy to stop this process with a judicious application of insecticide, but equally easy for the insect's own cellular defences to restart it.

In fact, the enzymes responsible for identifying and neutralising the insecticides can often be overproduced by insects. The more they produce, the more rapidly they can neutralise the insecticide, and therefore it is more likely they will survive.

Solution

The solution to this problem is remarkably simple: metabolic synergists. Chemicals such as PBO have no innate toxicity of their own, but they are remarkably efficient at inhibiting the enzymes which comprise the insect's own immune system.

Products with PBO in are therefore more likely to circumvent metabolic resistance to insecticides, as well as the added benefit of making the more rapid-acting (but also generally more rapidly-flushed) insecticides more potent to even less susceptible insect pests.

BEHAVIOURAL RESISTANCES IN RODENTS

Problem

Behavioural resistance is weird. It is more of a catch-all term for when an animal acts abnormally in a way which benefits its survival in the face of adversity.

Sometimes behavioural resistance can result from an animal's inability to process carbohydrates (and therefore to avoid carbohydrate-based baits) or it can be from learned or even shared behaviours. In these cases, this can reward the animals with a greater chance of survival for them literally acting weird.

Solutions

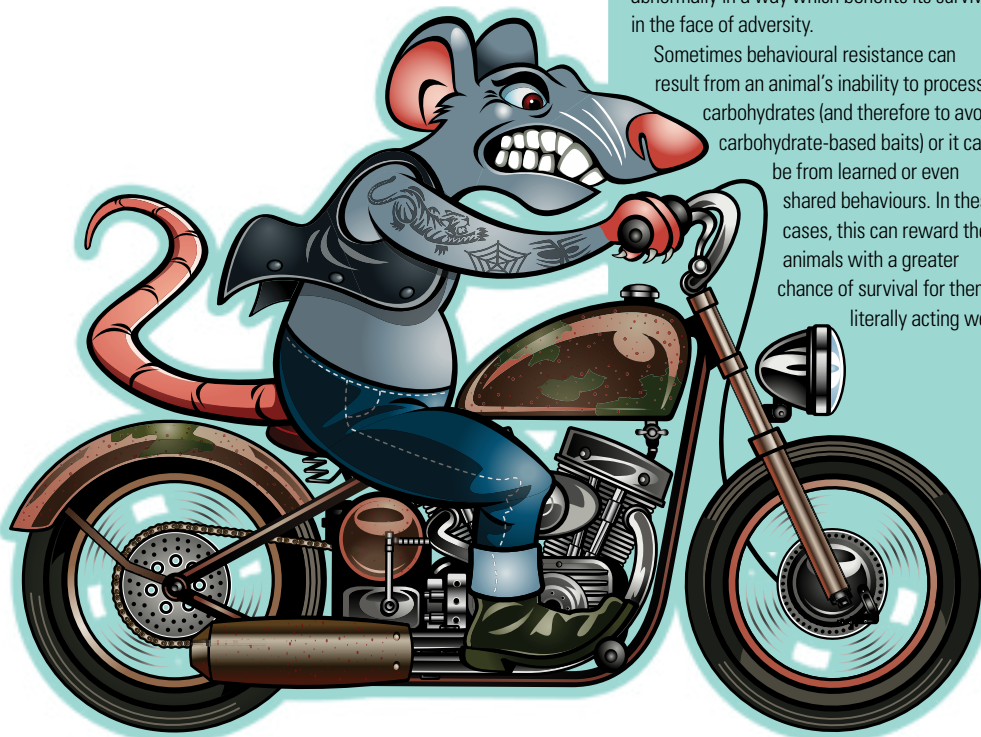
The solution to behavioural resistance is as simple as it is difficult. Understand what the animal does that makes it weird, and propose a strategy which does not rely on that behaviour.

Does the animal avoid carbohydrate-based baits? Use liquid baits or contact preparations, or adopt a strategy not reliant on chemicals, such as baiting traps with lures similar to the food being consumed.

If the behaviour is an avoidance borne of conditioned learning to a certain smell, location or object then the strategy needs to, where possible, eliminate those objects.

An aversion to plastics? Use wooden tamper-resistant bait boxes or cardboard where appropriate. Snap trap aversion? Consider aged wooden traps which have been on other sites or glue boards (where legal to do so).

In summary, take what makes that animal weird, and see if you can make it a solution rather than an obstacle.



GENETIC RESISTANCES IN INSECTS

Problem?

Much like rodents, insects also have a penchant for mutation. In reality, the prevalence and persistence of genetic resistance in insects is much higher and can occur significantly more rapidly than we witness in rodents.

In a World Health Organisation (WHO) study, it was found that house fly populations which were treated for three consecutive visits over three consecutive generations with the same insecticide became almost functionally immune to subsequent treatments.

As insects can easily achieve multiple generations within a single season, we must take care not to proliferate these resistances.

Solutions

Thankfully, despite their proclivity to foster and generate a rapid rise to resistance across generations, we have several tools which allow us to dampen the enthusiasm of our tiny crunchy adversaries.

Swapping modes of action

Much like with our genetic resistances in rodents, a swap between modes of action in insecticides is a good first step to curtail resistance.

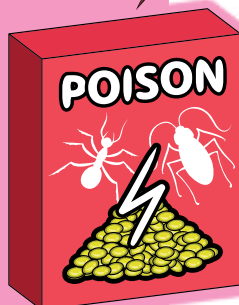
This means that, if using a natural or synthetic pyrethroid, the logical step would be to alternate to a carbamate or organophosphate - although the number and availability of such products is becoming vanishingly low (perhaps a conversation for another time).

The use of insect growth regulators

IGRs are slow burners. They have little effect on an insect population in terms of true mortality. They will not kill, but simply reduce the ability to grow, pupate or reproduce. This denies the insects the ability to give subsequent generations the genetic mutations to resist your chemical treatments.

Heat

Finally, with this (and in fact all insect resistances) the move away from chemicals to a physical mode of action will bypass any resistance that the insect has. Steamers, whole room and chamber heat treatments will therefore be tremendously effective against stubborn populations of insects.



"...a swap between modes of action in insecticides is a good first step to curtail resistance."



GENETIC RESISTANCES TO RODENTICIDES

Problem

We are seeing increasingly widespread resistance to the multifeed second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) in numerous locations across the UK.

These resistances have formed through the inheritance of mutant genes which confer varying degrees of tolerance to the chemicals we use.

Some resistant genes are relatively weak and only cause a minor loss in efficacy to one or the other of the anticoagulant rodenticides.

Others (such as the fabled L120Q) will bequeath a more robust tolerance, making the field application of both difenacoum and bromadiolone technically problematic.

Solutions

You will find that with many of the solutions discussed, knowledge is power. This is especially true when it comes to circumventing genetic resistance in rodents.

The first step is to know precisely what it is that you are dealing with. This can often be easily (and quickly) achieved by checking the Rodenticide Resistance Action Committee (RRAC) website/app and ascertaining the situation in your local area rrac.info

From there, the most expedient routes to success are:

Alternate between multifeeds

With all the resistances documented in rodents to date, only the L120Q variant shows resistance to both of the multifeeds. Therefore, if you are having control issues with difenacoum, try swapping to bromadiolone or vice versa.

Escalate in potency

If alternating between multifeeds doesn't seem to work despite good engagement with bait, then consider escalating from a multifeed to a single feed SGAR.

Although increases in tolerances are noted to some single feeds in the more potent strains of resistance, not one strain shows there to be a functional field resistance and so the strategy of escalation holds firm. However, we must remain mindful: a reliance on any one chemical is likely to generate resistance over time.

Swapping between modes of action

If neither strategy A nor B seem to be effective or appropriate for the area of the rodent control programme, then swap to a product with an alternative mode of action.

Either cholecalciferol or alpha-chloralose are able to circumvent most resistances borne of the hereditary mutations in rodents, as often these genetic resistances effect only isolated sections of the animal's biology. This means that something that gave resistance to SGARs is unlikely to provide resistance to an overdose of Vitamin D nor the narcotic effects of alpha-chloralose.

Last word on resistance in 2024

The major thing we need to keep in mind to control any resistance we encounter is simply this: understand what gives the pest an advantage and remove it! It's as simple and, as potentially brutally complicated as that.

DON'T OPEN THAT TRAP DOOR!

...BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING UP THERE!



An online CPD quiz based on this feature is now available on the BPCA website. BPCA Registered members and affiliates can take a CPD quiz at any time bpca.org.uk/cpd-quiz or sign up at bpca.org.uk/affiliate



In this seasonal special, Paul Westgate, from Veritas Pest Consultancy, takes a look at what or who could be lurking in our lofts during the winter.



To humans, the loft is just a storage place, somewhere to stash boxes of seldom used belongings, Christmas trees, suitcases and old toys.

For other animals, especially insects, the loft provides a refuge, a winter holiday resort. In their minds, the domestic loft is simply a heated tree, a habitat to occupy (albeit for many only on a temporary basis).

Many of the creatures that check in as the temperatures begin to fall in autumn are welcome guests; residing during the coldest months of winter and checking out in the spring once temperatures climb again. They complete their stay without fuss and without nuisance.

However, some are not so courteous or indeed welcome; they provide concern, discomfort and, like a jack-in-the-box, a surprise waiting to pop out later on in the year.

MAMMALS

Perhaps the most significant winter guests are not insects at all, but mammals.

Bats

Bats in the UK are highly protected; bats, their roosts and access to their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

There are some 17 species of bats in Britain, which represent about a quarter of all species of British mammals. One of the most common and well known, the pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) has an estimated population of around three million individuals.

This small bat is capable of eating around 3,000 insects per night and can regularly be found taking up residence in a loft space.

Bats commonly begin to check-in to their hibernation sites towards the end of October, emerging in early March.

Identifying the presence of bats is an important step when planning rodent or insect control work. Scattered piles of droppings similar in size to those left by mice, which crumble when squeezed, are perhaps the most obvious signs of these animals.

Their stay presents no direct issues but they may not be welcomed by all, and pest controllers should beware: fines for disturbing or interfering with a bat colony are severe.

Luckily, the Bat Conservation Trust provides excellent guidance and support for those domestic properties lucky enough to have bats roosting in a loft, plus excellent documentation to support pest control work. bats.org.uk



Female pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). Image by Drahrkrub.



Edible dormouse (*Glis glis*). Image by Sviciková.



Above: Cluster fly (*Pollenia rudis*)
Image by AfroBrazilian.



Yellow swarming fly (*Thaumatomyia notata*).
Image by Martin Cooper.



Green cluster fly (*Eudasyphora cyanella*).
Image by Tristram Brelstaff.

Edible dormice (*Glis glis*)

In certain parts of central England, another resident may be encountered during the winter months: the edible dormouse (*Glis glis*).

This introduced invasive species is now thought to number in excess of 25,000 individuals, largely throughout the Chilterns. They can overwinter in buildings, especially lofts where they present the same risks as the other more commonly encountered rodent species.

However, treatment is very different from their rat and mouse cousins, with a class licence needed before controls are applied (this is largely to support understanding of their distribution) See 'Edible dormice: licence to trap them (CL02)' gov.uk/government/publications/edible-dormice-licence-to-trap-them

No rodenticides are permitted for use on *Glis glis* and, aside for live capture and humane dispatch, only those traps listed on the Spring Traps Approval Order (and its associated variations) are permissible for use.

INSECTS

Cluster flies

Perhaps the most well-known and frequently encountered insect loft guest is the cluster fly (*Pollenia rudis*). This medium size fly – in its larval stage a parasite of the humble earthworm – enters loft spaces in sometimes biblical proportions during autumn.

The cluster fly is one of a number of species from the Polleniidae family and is perhaps the most obvious and bothersome of the loft's winter occupants.

A useful key for their identification can be found at 'Mike's Insect Keys' sites.google.com/view/mikes-insect-keys

These flies, although not directly linked with disease transmission, do present a risk to reputations. And they are bothersome and unwanted. Cluster flies often require treatment with insecticides, or carefully placed and serviced electric fly killers.

Other flies

A large number of other Diptera (true fly) species overwinter in the adult stage within lofts, and although not in the same numbers as the cluster fly it is common to

find members of the blow fly (*Calliphoridae*) family, such as the bluebottle (*Calliphora* spp.) and greenbottle (*Lucilia* spp.).

You may also see some Muscidae species (identifiable by bent fourth wing veins) such as the green cluster fly (*Eudasyphora cyanella*) and the autumn fly (*Musca autumnalis*).

Another fly of significance, from the grass fly family (*Chloropidae*), is the yellow swarming fly (*Thaumatomyia notata*). It has a distinctive yellow and black striped thorax and a similar size to the ubiquitous fruit fly.

They can build up in such significant numbers that irritation, repulsion and reputational damage can occur wherever these flies swarm in public facing areas.

Wasps

Queen wasps are regularly-encountered loft occupants, and the only member of the colony which survives the winter period.

The fertilised queen can often be found biting down on timber structures, remaining hidden in cracks and crevices, and awaiting the return of warmer times.

/continued...



True fly (Diptera).
Image by Mick Talbot.



Common wasp queen (*Vespa vulgaris*).
Image by Gail Hampshire.



Queen tending nest.
Image by Paul Padam.



Selontra®



We identified resistance to both first and second generation anticoagulants on the site. We switched to Selontra® and had really impressive results in just a matter of weeks and would definitely recommend the bait to other pest control professionals. We've actually widened its use as well to some of our other sites because of the results achieved."

Andrea, Manchester Port Health



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- > Breaks the cycle of resistance



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THAT
TRAP
DOOR!**



Common lacewing (order Neuroptera).
Image by Stephen Ausmus.



Peacock butterfly (Aglais io).
Image by Alpsdake.



Harlequin ladybird (Harmonia axyridis).
Image by Cole Shoemaker.

Queen wasps often check in earlier than many of the other loft 'residents' and their hibernation can begin well into the summer months.

When temperatures increase in spring the queens will set about the construction of their golf ball-sized nest which, if conditions are favourable, will soon develop into a thriving nest of many thousands of individuals.

Read BPCA's Pestwatch: Queen wasps bpca.org.uk/News-and-Blog/pestwatch-queen-wasps

Lacewings

Bright green or brown insects from the Neuroptera order of insects are often noted by homeowners. These lacewings are aphid-eating predators and often congregate in reasonable numbers in the loft.

Their presence is not usually significant and (in most cases) they will see out the winter unnoticed.

Butterflies

Another group of insects which largely undertake their stay unnoticed are the Lepidoptera. Several species of butterfly overwinter in the adult stage, in contrast to the majority of butterflies, which will overwinter in the pupal, larval or egg stage.

Two common flamboyant examples include the peacock (*Aglais io*) and the small tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*).

"These aphid-eating machines... rapidly left the confines of the greenhouse and entered the ecosystem..."

Ladybirds

The harlequin ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*) is a recent introduction to the UK. Arriving around 2014, it was bought to help control insect pests (aphids, thrips etc) within the glasshouse industry.

These aphid-eating machines, selected for their ferocious appetite, rapidly left the confines of the greenhouse and entered the ecosystem of Britain, where they are now commonplace.

Harlequin ladybirds cluster together, often in lofts, roof spaces and around window frames. They can cause minor damage to fabrics, furnishings, and have the potential to bite.

However, it is their impact on the environment which is perhaps far more problematic. There are reports that classify their impact on native ladybirds and other beneficial invertebrate species as somewhat significant.



You're a fool, if you dare

While the loft may seem a quiet, lonely and eerie place, in the animal world it is a temporary lodging; a hotel or a waiting room for better times, better conditions and a more favourable environment.

For a pest controller, when undertaking work in loft areas, be sure to check out who's in town and who's checked in for a long winter.

But remember, just like Berk from the 1980s Trapdoor kids' TV programme; be careful when you open that trapdoor, because there's something lurking 'up' there!

Find out more

For more information about insects and their identification, why not book onto a BPCA insect identification course, where you can improve your identification skills and facilitate the correct treatment?

bpca.org.uk/find-training

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HEDGEHOGS



Contrary to popular belief, pest controllers love British wildlife. Julia Pittman, from Beaver Pest Control, is a particular fan of hedgehogs. She explains how perilous the current situation is in Britain, and how we can help.

Native British hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) have been classified on the Red List for British Mammals 2020 as vulnerable to extinction, and are named on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, giving some legal protections.

That's a pretty serious position for these beautiful native animals – once a common sight in Britain, populations are declining rapidly with road deaths as high as 335,000 per year.

A 2022 report from the National History Museum said that “75% of all rural hedgehogs have been lost in the last 20 years”. The only bright spot is urban population numbers seem to be stabilising with human intervention.

Human interventions include:

- Training and guidance – learning when to intervene is particularly important
- Support feeding with high protein cat biscuits and water, as insect populations (their natural food source) are declining through pesticides
- Create hog highways through fences in urban areas, as hedgehogs can travel up to two miles in one night and move surprisingly fast
- Educate landowners – unfortunately, populations are still declining in rural areas
- Care and advice from active wildlife rescues.

Badgers, loss of habitat, and road traffic accidents are common causes of hedgehog fatalities. They are also prone to parasites, mange and garden injuries. That's a tough set of conditions for hedgehogs to deal with!



Biology and behaviour

Although primarily nocturnal, hedgehogs can also display ‘crepuscular’ behaviour, a funky word which means they can be active in twilight hours, early evening or early morning. They should not be seen in the day unless they are a nursing mother.

Female hedgehogs usually give birth in June and July, although if the weather has been mild then hoglet season can stretch from early spring right into autumn.

Generally, female hogs will give birth to one litter per year, consisting of four to five hoglets on average. They are born blind and become independent by eight weeks.

It's especially important not to disturb nests. Mothers can abandon the nest or even kill the hoglets if disturbed. If you inadvertently disturb a nest, leave it and quickly call a wildlife rescue for advice. Nest disturbances are time critical!

How can you help?

Check local populations via bighedgehogmap.org

This will tell you if you have hedgehogs in the vicinity. Ask customers if they are aware of hedgehogs before using bait stations.

You should always be minimising the risks to non-target species, including hedgehogs, when carrying out your work. First, do an environmental risk assessment, then think about hierarchy of control – can you use non-lethal methods?

Small hogs and hoglets crawl into bait stations so use alternative measures like proofing and habitat management, or position the bait stations in areas where they are unlikely to reach. Hedgehogs can climb, but not as well as rats.

There are wildlife-friendly bait stations available which can be positioned off the ground and have tubes which rats will get into, but not anything else. I've tested them in my garden, and they work.

Educate yourself about hedgehogs so you can share information with customers and direct them accordingly.

And remember that hedgehogs hibernate, so if you plan bonfires, check for hedgehogs before lighting up!

When to intervene

Try to observe hedgehogs from a distance as handling causes undue stress, but intervene if:

- There is an obvious injury – eg strimmers can cause terrible injuries
- The hog is out in the day and is wobbly, walking in circles or staggering – hogs do not sunbathe!
- It has flies around it – check for maggots or fly eggs and if it has signs of these (looks like rice grains) then collect in a high-sided box and call a rescue immediately, as this is time critical
- It has more than ten ticks, a sign of a potential parasite infection (under ten ticks, just observe as it's not unusual for a hog to have one or two)
- If a hedgehog is in danger – eg on a busy road
- If you see a very small hedgehog (the size of an apple) out when the weather is very cold – it will not survive winter without intervention.

Sick or injured hedgehog?

- Using thick gloves or a towel to carefully pick up the hedgehog and put it into a high-sided box
- Provide water but not food – if cold, you can provide heat from a small hot water bottle, but not if the hedgehog has fly strike (maggots or fly eggs) as they will hatch
- Call your local rescue; vets do not always have specific experience in wildlife, so wildlife rescues are the best way to get help.

Thank you for reading this and helping to care for our endangered hedgehog populations.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Great site with lots of free resources
hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs

General hedgehog information source
britishhedgehogs.org.uk

Report sightings or check on local populations
bighedgehogmap.org

Find the closest wildlife rescue to you
helpwildlife.co.uk

Size guides and advice for hoglets
rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/wildlife/hedgehogs/baby

Report a dead hedgehog
gardenwildlifehealth.org

Red list for British mammals
mammal.org.uk/science-research/red-list

DISSECTING
THE
MODERN
GREY
SQUIRREL
DILEMMA

GREY'S A



Grey squirrels went from an imported ornament for stately homes to an invasive species that threatens our own ecosystem. Dave Archer talks about the problem with grey squirrels, modern attitudes to invasive species and how to approach grey squirrel control.

Initially, I recommend taking a look at the legislation pertaining to these animals, even if you think you are familiar with the legalities. It's always useful to refresh your knowledge on the laws that affect your role.

Grey squirrels are classified as non-native pests, which means that they are subject to severe restrictive clauses in law; all of which are too involved to repeat here, but details are available on the GOV.UK page on invasive (non-native) animals gov.uk/guidance/invasive-non-native-alien-animal-species-rules-in-england-and-wales

Rule number one, that all good pest controllers should know: once in an (approved only!) trap, a grey squirrel must not be re-released into the wild.

How did grey squirrels find their way into the British countryside, and when?

In the past, the consensus of opinion was that different species of non-native fauna and flora, whether released by design or accident, would add to the diversity and attraction of our wildlife.

And so this was done with grey squirrels in 1876, with little or no historical experience of the detrimental impact such action would take.

Think of Reeve's muntjac, sika deer, edible dormice, signal crayfish, Spanish bluebells, rhododendron and so on.

Once the genie was out of the bottle, the odds of sealing the stopper again were always in favour of the escapee!

Can't we live and let live?

Why is there so much of a problem with greys? Well, they have driven red squirrels to the brink of extinction in the UK, either by being a more aggressive species or by infecting them with the fatal parapoxvirus. Grey squirrels are vectors of this disease, but not affected by it themselves. Instead, they spread it to native red squirrels and cause devastation among populations.

They are incredibly destructive, damaging trees such as beech, oak and chestnut. They strip bark from trees, which weakens them and they may eventually die, wreaking havoc on historic and ancient woodlands.

Additionally, they cause damage to property; window frames, woodwork, doors, soffits are all gnawed to keep their teeth razor sharp and gain access to feed stores or homes.

However, while we as pest controllers may see the downside of grey squirrels, there are an increasing number of members of the public who do not agree with this.

Greys are actively encouraged and fed by a sympathetic population, and one must bear this in mind if any form of control is undertaken. Unpalatable it may be to hear, but these days a TV personality's point of view on wildlife issues will generally be more influential to the general public than that of a qualified pest controller.

However, managing their populations is our responsibility, so what tools do we have to help with that?

Live trapping

In our favour, grey squirrels will trap easily, having little fear or suspicion of man. Of course, this is tempered by the skill and experience of the trapper.

The advantage of a live trap is that if any non-target species are captured, releasing them is a fairly simple operation.

As part of an ongoing risk assessment, one should always question why and how non-targets entered the trap and if improvements in the treatment plan can be made.

Always secure the traps! A trapped squirrel can easily roll a cage trap away, even if it is trapped inside. Secure it with metal (not plastic as it can be chewed through) or even better, wire the trap to a secured point. Dog lead clips, bird crimps and netting wire are ideal for these situations.

The Elgeeco cage trap is a simple but very effective method of cage trapping squirrels. Personally, I cannot recommend it highly enough.



"...grey squirrels will trap easily, having little fear or suspicion of man."

Even if the door closes before the squirrel enters the cage it will not alarm the squirrel; moreover the squirrel thinks the door has closed to prevent its entry to the food source!

Should you choose to trap using traditional ground cages, ensure the cage is large enough for your chosen target species. Too small and you could be breaking the law – again due to welfare issues and confinement.

And, remembering those animal welfare opinions, ensure live catch traps are hidden from the sight of neighbours and the general public. Also consider the trapped animal's food and shelter needs, and bear in mind that a grey squirrel in a cage trap can be a very noisy animal indeed.

Consider how you will remove and dispose of any live trapped squirrels, which will sometimes spray a line of urine at the trapper in a last attempt to thwart them!

NATOMY



None of the information given here relates to native red squirrels (*Sciurus Vulgaris*). Reds are one of our most endearing and increasingly rare fauna, are wholly protected and have different habits to the non-native North American grey squirrels (*Sciurus Carolinensis*). If there is any chance of red squirrels being present in an area, do not undertake spring trapping squirrel control!

Ensure that your customer signs a declaration to say they are the authorised landowner and will not interfere with any traps. They may sign to state they will only visually inspect live traps daily (as is a legal requirement) and contact you immediately if any squirrels are caught, only if you feel this is workable in the given situation.

Spring traps

These must be covered to prevent non-target entrance by law and you cannot use spring traps wherever stoats may be present.

It may seem obvious, but if your traps kill non-target species there is no chance to amend the situation for the victim. And it will be your fault!

Make part of your risk assessment about ensuring zero risk to non-target species. Your RA is a working document, so if something changes, change the assessment.



SO WHAT DON'T WE HAVE IN OUR TOOLKITS?

Rodenticides

Pest professionals used to have access to the rodenticide Warfarin, for use inside buildings. However, this was made illegal in February 2023. There are no rodenticides permitted for use on grey squirrels at this time.

Birth control

Squirrel contraceptives were being evaluated as a means to control numbers with the contraceptive being put into food, but I am assured this consideration is now 'dead in the feeder' so to speak.

Badly-set traps or poorly-designed (even artificial) tunnels can kill unintended victims.

Set traps will weaken the springs over time, so test their efficiency on a regular basis.

If you have never set lethal traps, don't attempt to do this without adequate training, otherwise broken fingers may result.

There are many and varied spring traps available these days but, for me, original Fenns were and are the best. Ensure your traps have Fenn stamped on the treadle (either Mk4 or 6) with two letter Ns and 'Made in England' on the pressure plate, or they are inferior imports!

For a better success rate, chum an area with a variety of fresh baits to see what the preference is, and leave spring traps baited in secure areas with the safety catch on until you are sure the squirrels have gained confidence in your traps. But never underestimate a squirrel's intelligence, cunning, or physical abilities!

Grey squirrels are extremely tough characters in all senses of the word – you must not equate them (as is often heard) as rats with bushy tails. Any spring traps must be checked for efficiency.

Shooting

Possibly the most controversial method of control. Whether by air-rifle, rimfire rifle or shotgun, not only must you fully consider and compile a written risk assessment of your actions, but you should be discreet.

In some situations, you may feel it appropriate to inform the local police force that you will be carrying out pest control with firearms, to prevent misunderstandings and head off any backlash.

Should any person who is in favour of grey squirrels be aware of your action, then expect the full gamut of emotions and possibly worse to be directed personally at you!

Again, your customer should sign a declaration that they are the authorised landowner. In rural areas where boundaries may not be clear this is imperative.

Freshly shot squirrels may bleed onto inappropriate areas. To this end, always cover any carcasses before removal to prevent distress in other people. This must all be part of your experience and risk management.

We've already mentioned how tough grey squirrels are, so make sure weapons are of suitable design and power to allow for this.

If you are using a gas-powered air rifle, have you ensured it is calibration tested to below the legal limit of 16.3Nm (12ft-lbs). Above this and it falls into the firearms category and you may have just unwittingly caused a serious firearms offence!

Another salient point to bear in mind is the fact that a customer reporting a few squirrels in a garden may actually have a very large infestation. The few they think they are seeing all the time may easily be in actual excess of twenty or thirty.

Your efforts may well serve to produce a temporary vacuum for others to very quickly fill. Think of urban feral pigeon control as opposed to proofing and you start to see the picture.

Your customer will be loath to pay for a control service, only to find more squirrels appearing in a matter of (sometimes) only days!

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OPINION

NO MORE GLUE BOARDS IN WALES

WHERE'S THE SUPPORT AND TRUST FOR PROFESSIONAL PEST CONTROL?

Martin Harvey, Managing Director of Harvey Environmental Services, tells PPC why he thinks the glue board ban in Wales shows a lack of respect for the professional pest control industry.

The ban on glue boards, which began in Wales on 17 October, sets a dangerous precedent for the rest of the UK and, in my opinion, it's a decision that is fundamentally flawed.

We have known for some time that a partial ban on the use of glue boards will come into force in England in April 2024. I say partial, because the legislation has a limited exception for pest control operations to apply to the Secretary of State for a licence to use one of these traps when there is "no other satisfactory solution" or where the action is required for "the purpose of preserving public health or safety".

But, to date we have not been informed about the parameters of this clause. It's vital that we do know soon. And here's why...

Failure to deal with infestations quickly poses a risk to human health; especially if this infestation is in a hospital ward, care home, school setting, or food business.

Plus, there may be wider economic implications should a business face closure caused by a rodent issue.

We agree that glue boards should only be used in the hands of a professional pest controller, traditionally only when other methods of pest control have been exhausted.

What is not yet clear is how we seek a licence to use glue boards when essential, and how long it might take.

England's exemption is similar to that of New Zealand, which banned glue traps in 2015, and successful glue trap licence applications in NZ have fallen every year since, with no approvals for use in 2021.

My fear is that it will be made almost impossible to get a licence on a case-by-case basis, and that could be catastrophic to the public and businesses alike.

We agree that control is necessary

The total ban in Wales highlights yet again the need for strict regulation in the sector, a sector for which entry requirements are lower than comparable trades.

We absolutely agree that they should not be sold to unregulated pest controllers seeking a quick fix solution at any cost. And they categorically should not be available for the public to purchase.

However, BPCA members are fully trained and qualified, and are bound by a code of practice for the safe and ethical use of glue traps. They are also required to take their ethical and legal responsibilities seriously, and we certainly do just that.

Traditionally, glue boards have been considered an incredibly useful tool for pest controllers to remove rodents from busy places quickly. For example, if there is a rat or mouse running around the customer area of a restaurant, it needs to be dealt with straight away.

Professionals need to be trusted to make their decision case-by-case, based on risk. A medium to high risk infestation may require a glue board solution, whereas the initial treatment for a low to medium risk infestation may be baits or traps.

We need to feel supported in our decision to use glue boards against rodents and, right now, we don't. We feel exposed and unprotected.

Every second counts

Let's consider the reality of a commercial rodent infestation. Using alternative methods to catch mice or rats could take several weeks. First, we must identify the source of the problem and then we have to encourage these savvy rodents to take our bait.

Often, they don't.

That means weeks, possibly months of rodents running around the premises and all the while they are multiplying at rapid rates.

As we're all aware, rats and mice breed approximately every 28 days with an average litter of eight and mice are sexually active within three weeks. Feral mice can even conceive while still pregnant.

One pair of rats can produce 2,500 young in a single year assuming there is no natural mortality. Infestations could easily get out of control.

And all carry diseases like hantavirus, leptospirosis, lymphocytic choriomeningitis (LCMV), and salmonella, posing a huge threat to human health.

Then consider the impact a potential business closure might have on a community, particularly if such a closure affects a care home of 100+ residents, all of whom have to be moved to alternative accommodation while in a fragile state.

Our plea to the legislators

As professionals in this sector, we are the ones who should be trusted to make considered decisions on a case-by-case basis and we need the authority to do this swiftly for the benefit of humans and animals alike.



Ben Sisson, Managing Director of Targeted SEO, gives us the lowdown on getting our pest control websites seen by as many people as possible.

If you're serious about increasing enquiries for your pest control business, then it's time to get on board with search engine optimisation (SEO). You may have heard a bit about SEO already, but if not, you're in the right place.

SEO is no dark art, it's just a clever combination of techniques to help websites rank higher in search engine results so they are seen by more potential customers.

Key SEO tactics to help generate more pest control leads:

- Well-structured web design
- High-quality user experience
- Use of keywords
- Location targeting
- Online reviews
- Content strategy
- A good Google business profile.



I'll explain these points in more detail, and I promise to use as little techie jargon as possible!

The premise of SEO is simple: more online visibility = more traffic to your website = more enquiries = more customers!

The practice is somewhat more complicated, but the Targeted SEO team is keen to demystify what it does, so that more pest control business owners like you can reap the rewards.

OPTIMISE YOUR PEST CONTROL WEBSITE FOR GOOGLE



Why is it important to have an optimised website for a pest control business?

If a potential customer Googles local pest control companies in your area, you want your website to be as high up in the organic search results as possible. By 'organic', we mean the results that start below the paid-for and sponsored ads.

The top search result gets the lion's share of clicks – a recent study found it to be over a quarter backlinko.com/google-ctr-stats

As you move down the list, the number of click-throughs drops dramatically, and it tapers down to almost nothing beyond the tenth result.

And less than one percent of web users venture past the first page of search engine results pages (SERPS).

Let that sink in. If your website is not on page one for pest control searches in your local area, there's less than a one percent chance of it being seen by your potential customers. Even if it ranks fourth, a person is six times more likely to click on the three results above it.

That's why SEO is an essential investment for your pest control company. It will make your website more visible to your target market and can result in a steady stream of pest control leads for years to come.

What is SEO for pest control?

SEO for pest control is a variety of techniques to help websites get higher rankings in Google search results. It is usually carried out by a specialist SEO company. SEO is much more than just a pretty website; to enable a search engine to read and understand a site takes a lot of technical jiggery-pokery.

At Targeted SEO, our services broadly break down into four categories...

On-page SEO involves optimising elements on your website, like titles and descriptions.

Off-page SEO refers to activities outside of your website, like getting links from other sites to yours to improve your reputation.

Local SEO helps to target customers in your area by ensuring your website appears in local searches for pest control.

Content strategy is fancy term for filling your website with lots of great information.



"If your website is not on page one for pest control searches in your local area, there's less than a one percent chance of it being seen by your potential customers."

TOP SEO TIPS FOR GETTING MORE PEST CONTROL CUSTOMERS

Provide valuable information about your pest control services

Google favours websites that feature relevant and high-quality content. The more credible and useful it deems a website to be, the higher it will rank it.



So it's important to have rich content about your pest control services and create blog posts based on what your target audience Googles, eg 'why do wasps come out in summer?'. SEO aside, creating content will help establish your pest control company as knowledgeable and trustworthy, which is crucial in winning over new customers.

Sort your Google business profile

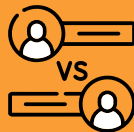
When potential clients Google your services, your Google business profile may be the first thing they see. So, if your company's profile is somewhat lacking, I urge you to whip it into shape as soon as possible.



It's a valuable free tool that improves online visibility in Google Maps and local search results. It's also become one of the most popular sources of online reviews, so the more positive reviews you have, the more it will impress potential customers.

Get ahead of the local competition

A lot of pest control SEO revolves around improving visibility in local search results, eg 'residential pest control near me' or 'bed bug treatment in Berkshire'.



A local SEO campaign employs several on-page and off-page SEO techniques to ensure that Google knows where your business is located and what it does. That way, you are more likely to appear in the Google 'local pack', ie the top three search results.

"The more credible and useful it deems a website to be, the higher it will rank it."

Structure your website so that search engines understand it

Website structure must be in a format that search engines can 'crawl' and understand. This involves using the right words and phrases (keywords) on your website's pages so that search engines can easily match them with what people are searching for.



On-page SEO also includes making sure your website offers a high-quality user experience on both desktop and mobile devices. We all know from experience that page speed is essential, as well as clear headings and descriptions. Not only is it great for the person looking at your website, but Google prefers websites that are easy to use and ranks them higher.

There's a lot of back-end work that goes into making sure a website is structured properly, but I promise to keep the jargon to a minimum! But, if you're curious as to what terms like 'technical SEO', 'meta description', 'title tags' and 'schema markup' mean, get in touch, and we'll be happy to elaborate.

Is SEO expensive for pest control companies?

At Targeted SEO, we don't have rigid pricing structures. We can give you a bespoke SEO quote based on the size and condition of your current pest control website and what you hope to achieve. We charge a monthly retainer rate which includes everything you need to get your business seen.



SEO takes time to work, so you should plan to invest for at least 12 months, ideally 24 months. But the results are valuable and sustainable. Your optimised site will continue to generate leads for years to come with little effort, giving you superb value for money.

Increase your enquiries

If this has sparked your interest in SEO and what it can do for your pest control company, then take a look at some of our recent case studies, including how we increased website traffic for one pest control company by 2,494% in 12 months! We're proud of the SEO results we've achieved for pest control clients, and we'd love the chance to do the same for your business. Get in touch by filling out our contact form, and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.



targetedseo.co.uk/industries/seo-for-pest-control

See what your competitors do

It always pays to keep a beady eye on what the most successful pest control company in your area is up to. Every successful SEO campaign involves analysing other websites to see how they are performing and what their customer base is searching for. That way, we can identify targeted keywords to help your website get the edge and rise through the rankings.







The pest management show
13-14 MARCH 2024 / EXCEL, LONDON

Targeted SEO is a digital marketing agency specialising in SEO for the pest control industry. Find us in person at stand 66 PestEx 2024. The team will be on hand to answer your questions and provide insights into the world of SEO for pest control. See you there!

pestex.org/register

SOCIAL NOTIONS



BPCA's Marketing and Communications Officer, Kat Shaw, gives PPC readers a run down of her top tips for social media use in your business.

It's 2023 and as a very online society, we're positively drowning in social media channels to check and update. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, X (the artist formerly known as Twitter), Threads. And those are just the most popular ones.

As a business, you already know that it's an important space to occupy - there are genuine disadvantages to having no social media presence.

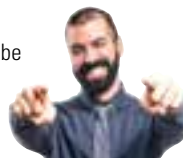
But let's not focus on all the reasons you should be on social media and assume that you already are.

There is such a thing as doing social media wrong, so we're here to give you some tips on how to use your social media presence effectively and navigate the digital world responsibly.

"If you post the right kind of content and show that you have in-depth knowledge of pest control, people will call."

DO Be authentic

You don't always have to be business-like in tone on your social media channels. If you feel confident enough to find your voice and tone, use it to create an authentic online persona. Have fun with it and be yourself (while still remaining professional, of course). Jokes are encouraged!



DO Engage with comments, positive and negative

It's easy to respond to the nice stuff, that's a walk in the park. Engaging with negative comments is much trickier. But you're a pest controller - customer service is what you're about! And it's transferable to an online platform.

It can be tempting to ignore or hide unfriendly responses to your content, but it can actually help your business to respond thoughtfully to these kinds of comments.

How would you respond to a complaint in real life? Be friendly, genuine, maybe offer a short and polite explanation to counter the complaint, and give them the option of taking the conversation offline by providing your office number for a chat.

However, if a comment is overtly rude or inappropriate in nature it may not be worth engaging and you're within your rights to delete or hide these kinds of posts.

DO Post thoughtfully

Think before you post! Consider the potential impact on your reputation with anything that you put on your business pages.

And always share content that is informative, interesting or useful for your followers. Ending every post with "call us for your pest control needs" isn't necessary. If you post the right kind of content and show that you have in-depth knowledge of pest control, people will call.

DO Protect your client's privacy

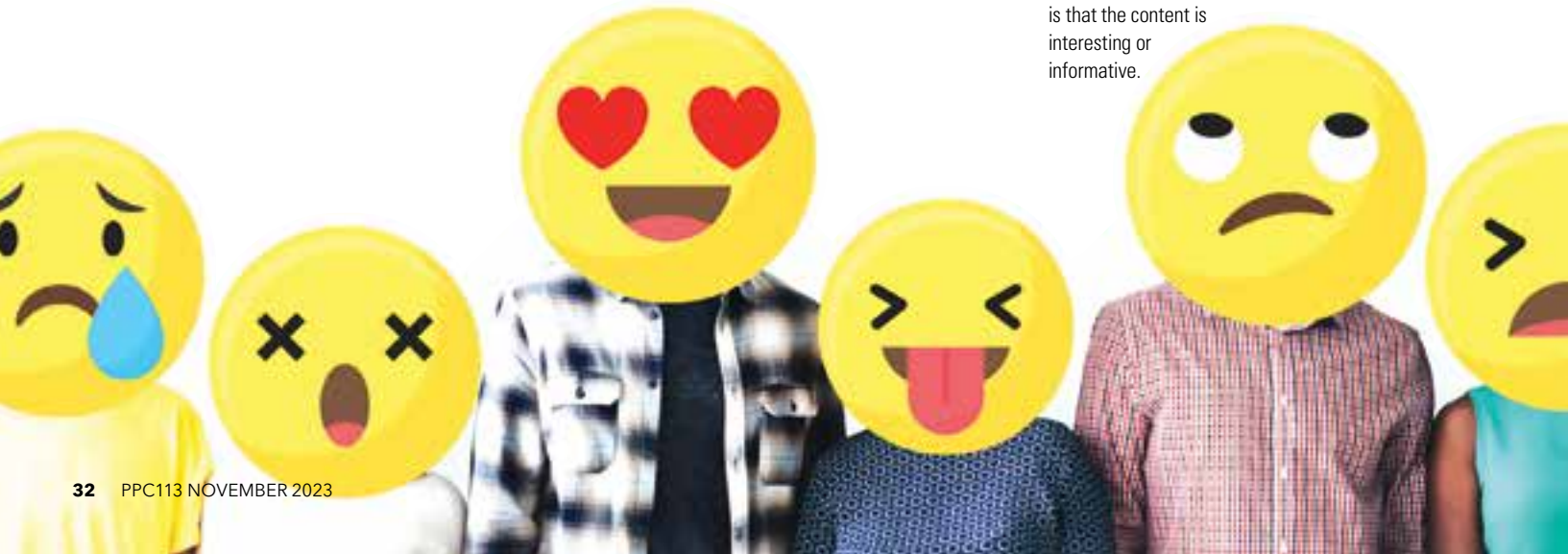
It's great to showcase what your job is all about; sharing photos and videos of you or your technicians in action, pests that you're dealing with or the end result of a job well done.

One thing to be mindful of is that your client or their address are not identifiable, whether that's a residential customer or a commercial one. If in doubt, ask your client.

DO Use proper grammar and spelling wherever possible

There's always a pedant out there, waiting patiently on every platform for someone to slip up and write "their" instead of "there". Try not to give them the satisfaction and proofread before posting to avoid errors.

If you struggle with spelling, have someone proofread your posts for you if possible or use free tools like Grammarly or Hemingway Editor. But remember: it's not the be all and end all if your posts don't have correct spelling. What matters is that the content is interesting or informative.



“It can be tempting to ignore or hide unfriendly responses to your content, but it can actually help your business to respond thoughtfully to these kinds of comments.”

DON'T Engage in online arguments

While we encourage good customer service style responses to certain negative comments, you should refrain from engaging in heated arguments or confrontations. It doesn't look professional!

Know where to end a discussion with someone who's disgruntled, point them towards your telephone number in order to take the conversation offline and then stop engaging.

And don't react emotionally! Posting in the heat of the moment, especially when upset or angry, is a big no no. Take time to cool off before responding.

DON'T Spam or overpost

Don't flood your followers' feeds with too many posts in a short period – it's a surefire way for people to unfollow you, especially if the posts are excessively self-promotional.

How many is too many? Think about setting yourself a posting limit – and the limit doesn't have to be the same across all the platforms you use. You can often post more frequently on a platform like X than you can on Facebook, without risking losing followers.

DON'T Accidentally like or follow inappropriate posts

This is something that is all too commonly seen on business pages, particularly on platforms like X. People scroll the newsfeed logged into their business pages and give a quick 'like' reaction to something that you shouldn't want your customers to see, such as explicit content. “But surely that doesn't happen, Kat?!” I've seen it happen, folks.



DON'T Be negative or offensive

It should go without saying, but don't post offensive, discriminatory, or hateful content. Stay positive,

kind and above all, don't roast your customers online! That's a fast route to bad reviews and a bad reputation.

DON'T Buy fake followers or engagement

Apart from spending your hard-earned money unnecessarily, building a genuine following is always more valuable than buying fake followers. You're looking to create a community, and fake engagement can damage your credibility.

Remember...

Social media is a powerful tool that can have a significant impact on the success of your pest control business.

Try to make the most of your online presence while avoiding common pitfalls. Get social savvy!



Want some more advice on your social media marketing?

BPCA members can book time with the marketing team for a 1-2-1 advice session (login required).

bpca.org.uk/book



TOP SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Canva
Image editing
canva.com

Buffer
Social media scheduling tool
buffer.com

Hashtag research tool
inflect.com/tools/instagram-hashtag-generator

Pexels
Free stock images
pexels.com

Grammarly
Personalised AI writing suggestions
grammarly.com

Hemingway Editor
Make your writing bold and clear
hemingwayapp.com

OUR FAVE BIG BRAND SOCIAL PAGES

Looking for some inspiration? The BPCA team love these accounts.

Aldi UK
Hilarious, topical posts often about their rivals.

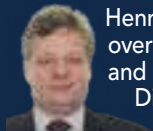
Innocent Drinks
Topical, conversational posts – great use of images.

Ryanair
They're mean to people who complain about them (don't try this yourself!)



TIRED OF THE RAT RACE?

SELLING YOUR PEST CONTROL BUSINESS



Henry Mott is a seasoned veteran in the pest management industry. With a career spanning over 30 years, he has held many senior positions in national companies, as well as owning and managing his private business for 17 years. In his current role as Mergers and Acquisition Director for Vergo UK, he has effectively managed and supported numerous business owners in taking that huge step of deciding to sell their business.

As the owner of a pest control company in the UK, you've likely invested significant time, money, and energy into building and growing your business. But there comes a point when you may consider selling your venture, in order to retire, change career paths, or seize new opportunities.

Whatever your reasons, selling your company is a significant decision that requires careful planning and a clear understanding of the market.

This article delves into the process of selling up, drawing from the experiences of numerous business owners who have been through the process already and seeking to take a potential seller through the basic steps of the process.

Making an informed choice

Knowing when it's time to sell your company is a deeply personal choice.

For some, it's about finally cashing in on years of hard work, while others just want a fresh challenge.

To make a smart decision, you should gauge the market conditions and your personal circumstances. If there's a strong demand for pest control businesses and your company is thriving, it might be an opportune time to sell.

Often, the value of your business will determine the decision to sell. In many cases the valuation will allow you to make those life changes that you have promised yourself.

Whether it is a villa in the south of France, a yacht in the Mediterranean, clearing your debts and having a quiet retirement, or a completely new venture, what is left after costs and taxation will no doubt be the key factor in whether you sell or not.

Selling yourself

Business valuations begin by understanding the worth of your company. Preparation is key before listing your business for sale, so take steps to maximise its appeal.

There are many avenues to explore regarding obtaining a valuation, but as is always the case, a business is ultimately only worth what someone is prepared to pay.

I would always recommend producing a prospectus for your company. Clearly, the document will not want to divulge 'trade secrets' about your company but consider it in the same manner that you might a house sale.

Think about any USPs your company may have, such as specialist services, existing growth opportunities, unique sectors you operate in, and so forth.

Include other relevant information such as staff numbers, regions you operate in, trading performance over the last three years, company history, and so on.

Remember, you will only sell your business once, and while buyers are always keen to acquire, don't just rely on their enthusiasm to value your business: it's a two-way street!

Are your books balanced?

Part of the process should include a 'financial clean up'. Ensure your financial records are accurate and up-to-date, as potential buyers will scrutinise them closely.

Work with your accountant, look through previous years, and understand the figures as well as possible. Have answers ready for any anomalies that may exist.

You also need to understand 'above-the-line' and 'below-the-line costs'. Most buyers look at 'earnings before interest and taxes' (EBIT) or 'earnings before interest, taxes, depreciations and amortisation' (EBITDA), and use multiples to drive valuations.

If you own property that you operate from, consider if you want this to form part of the deal or if you'd rather explore other options that are available for you. Property can be one of the most challenging aspects from a legal perspective when selling your business, so have a plan ready for all eventualities.

Consider all of your equipment and assets. Repair or replace any outdated or malfunctioning equipment. A well-maintained fleet and updated tools can enhance your company's value.

The goodwill that is generated from your customer base will be the majority of what the buyer is valuing and acquiring. Review client contracts; long-term contracts can be desirable to buyers as they guarantee future revenue. Companies will always value recurring revenue higher than one-off work when examining turnover.

"... a business is ultimately only worth what someone is prepared to pay."

QUICK TIPS FOR SELLING A PEST CONTROL COMPANY

Stay informed

Keep abreast of market trends in the UK's pest control sector.

Network

Attend industry events to meet potential buyers and brokers.

Be transparent

Open communication with potential buyers can expedite the sales process.

Remember

The sale of your business isn't just a financial transaction. It's a culmination of your passion, dedication and hard work. Approach it with the seriousness and attention it deserves.

A business is only as good as the staff it employs. Good sellers and buyers will always put the staff and customers at the forefront of their decisions.

At what point you involve staff can, of course, be a delicate decision. Not involving key staff until the deal is done can be counterproductive for all parties, but equally, it can come with risk.

It may be that you will need to involve some key staff during the due diligence process, to obtain information that may not be readily available. It is almost always best to discuss the situation with them beforehand if you feel that the risk of them working it out for themselves is very likely.

The legalities and due diligence are, without a doubt, a stressful process, irrespective of how well-prepared you are beforehand. The buyer's lawyers will understandably want to drill down into every detail, as they have a professional responsibility to their clients.

By their nature, lawyers are risk-averse and will require detailed paper trails on a whole host of areas that you may have never considered as you have progressed your business over many years. Being patient and cooperative is essential, and having a lawyer acting for you who is very familiar with buying and selling businesses is an absolute must. This is not an area where you should cut costs!

The right fit

Working with a buyer and feeling confident about their approach is essential for a smooth transition. Consequently, finding the right buyer can and should be

as much about its approach to staff and customers as the valuation. To protect your staff, make sure you have robust contracts in place with them and ensure that their roles are clearly defined.

Negotiating the deal is where the rubber meets the road. Understand beforehand what you're willing to compromise on and where you draw the line. For instance, are you firm on your asking price, or is there wiggle room?

And what about payment terms? Will you accept staggered payments, or do you require a lump sum? And as part of the post-sale transition, what period would you expect to wait before receiving full payment?

Most good buyers will work with a client to find a path that suits them both and will be, within reason, flexible and have options available. One size does not necessarily fit all, and the true art of negotiation is compromise.

After finalising the sale, there's typically a transition period where you hand over the reins to the new owner: this can range from a few weeks to several months.

During this time, ensure the continuity of services and maintain client trust. This is where good relations with buyers and your own relationship with your employees are critical, and where having taken the correct steps from the beginning will pay off.

Finally, don't forget about looking ahead. Consider your next stages once you've sold your business and plan for your future, whether it's retirement, starting a new venture, or simply taking a break.

It may be that you can continue to work within the organisation that has acquired your business, but be aware that you will almost certainly have to adjust to having a boss, which may be a pretty hard pill to swallow after years of ownership!

The big final step

Selling a pest control company in the UK is a significant undertaking. However, with careful planning, expert advice, and a clear understanding of the process, you can ensure a successful sale that rewards you for your years of hard work.

Full disclosure

At Vergo, we're always looking to acquire fantastic pest control businesses. For an informal and confidential chat about your options, please contact me directly.

henry.mott@vergo.uk
07787 101 501



MEET THE TECHNICIAN

THERE'S NO FATE BUT WHAT WE MAKE FOR OURSELVES

Ian Adamson is General Manager at Precision Consulting, based in Yorkshire. He spoke to PPC about his love of science, career pathways for young and mature people, and how he hopes to shine a spotlight on invisible disabilities in the industry.

PPC We know a lot of people didn't start their working careers in pest control – did you?

IA I certainly didn't. I actually started off working for Midland Bank, then I did a few jobs relating to retail.

When I was younger, I was a little bit naughty and got chucked out of college, so I didn't go to university. But after working those jobs, it got to a point in my life where I wasn't enjoying what I was doing, and my wife and I sat down to talk and we decided that I should have a shot at university. So that's what I did, I went back as a mature student.

PPC At what age did you go to university?

IA Around 26. I graduated in 1998 with a degree in biology from University of York, but the first thing I had to do once I graduated was find work because I had bills to pay! I picked up *The Grocer* magazine because I was expecting to have to go back into retail and there it was: an advert for pest control surveyors for a company called Dynokil. And would you believe it, at the bottom in small print it just said, "if you've got a degree in biology and fancy being a biologist for our company, give us a call".

I phoned a guy called Karl Wilkinson, who was technical manager at the time and the rest is history. I'd never thought of pest control as a career. But there it was, it fell into my lap. And it just so happened I was really good at it, and I've enjoyed it ever since.

PPC Sounds like returning to university as a mature student worked out quite well for you. What would you say to people who maybe are in that same situation, don't enjoy what they're doing but think the time for retraining or university has passed?

IA Just go for it, it's never too late. I know that at the moment we're working a lot on trying to get young people into pest control, through the work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. But there are a lot of mature people out there too, for whom this would be a brilliant career change.

The thing is, I don't know many people who at the age 16 and 17 know what they want to do with their lives. And some of them are going to get it wrong. I've got a 17-year-old son now and he did a year at college, and hated it. And he sat down and said, "Dad, I've wasted a year of my life".

I disagreed. I said "You just learned something about yourself, and life is about learning".

I've done this job now for 25 years, but I started when I was 30. All those years before that I was just learning about me and what I actually really wanted to do. And in the end it was a decision that was half made for me, which put me on the track to doing something that I really love.

Often, young people are forced down paths they don't particularly want to go down, but they need to know that you don't always have to stick at something you don't enjoy. Not everybody wants to go to university or college, or do a stressful job. But then there are other



people who need to experiment and find something else that challenges them in different ways. It just takes more time for some people than others to figure out what they want out of a job.

There's a lot of pressure on young people to know very quickly what they want to do, and it's just not how the world works, is it? We aren't programmed, we're all individuals with different goals. My son and I both have autism, but that doesn't mean we're the same person. We have that shared experience, but we have different habits, different mindsets.

PPC Absolutely, very true. If you don't mind us asking, do you find that your autism comes into play in the way that you work and the job that you do?

IA I'm happy to speak about it. I mean the beauty of the job that I do is that a lot of my autistic traits filter into it very well. I'm very meticulous, very fixated on solving problems, and ever since I could talk I've been fascinated by the natural world.

There are some disadvantages that I have to work through, though. When I'm talking to people, I'm overly blunt sometimes and that can be difficult when I'm auditing. I'm not very good at multitasking, so if I'm typing up a report I have to put my phone on silent and I have to switch my emails off, so I can focus on what I'm doing.

Working from home helps with having fewer distractions. While I don't mind being part of a team, I'm not a big group person and I find working in an office a bit overwhelming at times, with all the noise and the bustle.

"The thing is, I don't know many people who at the age 16 and 17 know what they want to do with their lives. And some of them are going to get it wrong."



“...the beauty of the job that I do is that a lot of my autistic traits filter into it very well. I’m very meticulous, very fixated on solving problems, and ever since I could talk I’ve been fascinated by the natural world.”

That’s why what I do suits me, because I’m out on the road by myself most of the time. My directors know me, they know that the job is going to get done and that, you know, I’ll contact them if I need anything, they’re very understanding.

“As long as employers make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, they can be a valuable part of your team.”

PPC You say pest control fell into your lap, but it sounds almost like fate, like it was a job that was meant for you.

IA Oh, you see, you sound like my wife now! She says “everything happens for a reason”. For example, I was made redundant during the pandemic; people were turning auditors away from sites because in the beginning we weren’t classed as essential. And the company I was with wanted to change the management structure because they’d recently been bought out, so they took the opportunity to do it mid-pandemic. I got talking to Mike Ayers who owns Precision Pest Management, about the idea of setting up a consultancy with the same brand. Long story short, that’s how I ended up General Manager of Precision Consulting. It was fantastic because I didn’t have the financial backing to be able to spend

two or three years building a business on my own. It worked out perfectly, and my wife said “everything happens for a reason” and the infuriating thing is: she’s always right!

PPC What made you decide to pitch a consultancy, why not just go look for a random field biologist job for another company?

IA I have an auditing qualification and I enjoy the auditing side of it as much as the field biology role. This way I get to combine both.

Yesterday I was in Northern Ireland just doing biologist inspections for another pest control company. The week before that I was on site auditing a pest control company. It’s hard to get that balance between working with the pest control contractor and being blatantly honest with the customer about times when service isn’t where it should be, and like I said before, with my autism I perhaps tend to be a little bit more blunt than I should be sometimes. But it’s about pooling our resources and working together to provide a good service; customer, contractor and auditor. If things aren’t right, let’s talk about how to put them right.

And let’s never assume we all individually know best; I’ve got 25 years’ experience, which is a lot, but I might be working on an audit with someone who has 40 years’ experience in pest control. And then you might get someone who has only been in the industry a few years, but is thirsty for knowledge. You combine all of that skill and that’s you making a great team.

PPC You’re on the EDI Committee that we mentioned earlier, why did you join and what are you hoping to achieve from it?

IA I joined it because of my autism. I want people to know that pest control can be for anybody. As long as employers make

reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, they can be a valuable part of your team. I’m the general manager of a company now and I have autism. I’m proud of the fact that I’ve found a role that really suits me and it’s important that we don’t dismiss people who may be very good at this job. Don’t get me wrong, having autism does come with disadvantages. But if you can work around those disadvantages then you can use the advantages, and that’s what employers need to know. For every disadvantage I have, I’ve got a bunch of significant advantages as well. People can be a bit silent about invisible disabilities, like autism, dyslexia, or ADHD. That’s why I wanted to join the EDI Committee, to give a voice at BPCA about that side of the coin.

PPC Well said. One last question: what would you say that you’re most passionate about in terms of pest control?

IA I enjoy looking at trends, I’m very passionate about the correct use of data. We collect a lot of data as pest controllers and I get a bit disappointed with how little is used. I’m also passionate about teaching people; I do a little training for BPCA here and there, and for clients. I’ve got a training session lined up with a supermarket in the next couple of weeks, just training auditors in knowing what good pest control looks like.

And I love getting to bring science into it. People have this very old-fashioned rat catcher idea of what pest control looks like. But it’s not. It’s a very cerebral, very calculated job that we do, and to be good at it you really have to be multi-skilled as well as have the ability to learn and understand biology, chemistry, maths and so on. I think it’s one of the biggest culture shifts we need to see, as an industry; that we’re recognised as the skilled and smart professionals we are.

MEET THE MEMBER

GIVING BACK? IT'S NOT A MIND FIELD

PPC spoke to Helen Dockrill and Albie Tyler from Essex-based 3Way Pest Control, about the company's charitable ethos and the way they support Mind, the mental health charity.

PPC First, did you want to tell us a little bit about 3Way and what your roles are in the business?

HD It was started in 1978 as a carpet cleaning business, by George Webb and his wife. George has now retired, so his son Anthony Webb is the Managing Director. It's a family-run business.

It originated as a cleaning company but we started the pest control venture in 2013, and it's been a real success.

I'm the Customer Service and Sales Manager, and I've worked for 3Way for 21 years.

AT And I'm the Contract Manager and Pest Control Manager. I've worked here for 10 years, I believe.

PPC One of the reasons we're talking today is because you found out our charity of the year is Mind, the mental health charity, and you do some work for them, is that right?

HD We do, yes. Mind has an office in Grays, here in Essex. It's called a 'wellbeing centre' and they do great work in the community mindinwestessex.org.uk

Starting in about 2008 we began cleaning for them, but then in 2015 they came to us with some bad news: they were going to have to cancel our cleaning contract due to a lack of funding.

AT That didn't sit right with us. It's a support network that's quite close to all of our hearts, and that many of us have used. We've all at some point needed a bit of help. So when Anthony was told that Mind were going to have to cancel our services, he was quite happy to take it on as a free of charge service instead. Now we do their cleaning and they get pest control thrown in, and we don't charge them anything for it.

I think by our latest calculation we'd provided something like 1,534 hours of free cleaning support to them, not counting the pest control.

PPC And I imagine they were really grateful! What does it mean to you, to be able to help Mind that way?

HD Like I said, it's a vital service. I've used it. Some of my family members have used it and there's other people at 3Way that have used that service too. Over the years we've all needed a bit of support and it was just a given that when they said that they couldn't afford it because of budgeting that we'd do it.

It's a service that is very much needed, especially now after Covid-19 affected people so much, I think it's even more necessary than ever. Without the support that we get through charities like this, many of us would struggle.

Anthony is very big on giving back; 3Way is not just a business and it never has been. We obviously need to make money to survive, but there's a lot more to it than just that.

PPC It sounds like you have a lot of respect for your MD?

HD Yeah, one of the reasons our staff retention is so high is because we're not just numbers but we're treated like people. I recently lost my dad, and he was being cared for by St Luke's Hospice. I mentioned to Anthony in passing how good they are, and so he's going to keep it on his radar to do something to support them.

And it's not just charity support, he supports us personally, too. I won't name names, but there's a gentleman that's worked for us for quite a long time and he lost his dad, who lived in Jamaica. It was very sudden, so he couldn't get home because he hadn't got the money and so Anthony paid for his flight.



"Without the support that we get through charities like this, many of us would struggle."

PPC Other than Mind, do you do any other community or charity work?

AT We do quite a lot with other charities as well. Giving back to the community is quite important to the business, so we sponsor a local under-13s football team in Hatfield. They've recently just won their championship! And each year some of us do the London Winter Run, a 10K race for charity.

If any of our colleagues recommend a charity that they're interested in, the management team will always listen and see whether they can help.

AT Obviously we love to give back. Anthony, Helen and all the other managers in the company have a great relationship with a lot of people in the community, so it's just nice to show our support.

Historically at 3Way, we've had zero marketing; a lot of the customers that we do have have come through word of mouth, relationships in the community that we've fostered.

HD We've had some customers for like 30 years, which in this industry is quite difficult to do, it's quite a cut throat industry in many respects when it comes to contracts.

I think because we've got that personable side to us, it does keep customers with us. It's the same with the staff retention as well.

So with the charitable stuff we do, there's an element of like... our business has been built by the community, in some ways. And we're just returning that support. It's just nice to be in a position where we can do that.

OPINION

THE CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE

MAKING THE PEST INDUSTRY MORE APPEALING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

A main aim of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee is to address the issue of recruitment in the pest control industry.

Julia Pittman, Beaver Pest Control, is the Chair of the EDI Committee and Rebekah Carral, Barricade Pest Control, is Vice Chair. They decided to investigate the issue at the source, and they asked some young people what they thought of pest control as a career.

PEST CONTROL SOUNDS LIKE HARD WORK.

WHAT'S PEST CONTROL?

Interestingly, after explaining the job and what it involves, this respondent said that sounds really interesting and definitely a job they would consider.

THE PAY IS NOT ENOUGH FOR ME TO CONSIDER IT.

I would scroll past a role like this on Indeed due to pay. If the salary was higher for a trainee role, it may be something I would consider.

I'D BE LOOKING FOR A JOB WITH A GOOD CAREER PATH, PEST CONTROL DOESN'T SOUND LIKE IT HAS MANY CAREER OPTIONS.

IT'S A MAN'S JOB.

If I had a pest issue I'd assume it was a man who would turn up. I personally feel that others have the same opinion and being a woman, it doesn't sit right with me nor would I be comfortable going into homes of the general public on my own. I'd have safety concerns.

THE JOB ADS HAVE TOO MUCH INFORMATION, I DON'T WANT TO READ THAT MUCH.

I'd rather see videos, photos, something that catches my eye before I decide whether it's worth investing time into learning more.

I'M SCARED OF CREEPY CRAWLIES AND MICE.

I couldn't face working in an environment where I would have to face these things daily.

IT SOUNDS LIKE A DIRTY JOB.

I THINK YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T JOIN PEST CONTROL BECAUSE IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THE RIGHT JOB FOR A YOUNG PERSON.

It sounds like it requires qualifications and may take a while to achieve those, that's why it's often older men who carry out this work.

IF I SAW SOMEONE YOUNG ON TIKTOK DOING THE JOB THEN IT WOULD BE MORE APPEALING TO YOUNGER PEOPLE.

I DON'T THINK PEST CONTROL IS ADVERTISED ENOUGH TO GRAB THE ATTENTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE ENTERING THE WORKFORCE.

Maybe if there was a functioning apprenticeship scheme in pest control that would change things a lot.

YOUNGER PEOPLE TEND TO HAVE OTHER IDEAS OF WHAT THEY WANT TO DO.

Pest control isn't something that comes to the front of their minds. Many of them want to earn money by doing stuff on social media, but there are those who tend to do trade training to be electricians, plumbers, bricklayers.

IT COULD ALSO BE THAT THEY ARE UNSURE WHAT THE JOB ACTUALLY ENTAILS.

They don't see it as a career, but maybe if they knew that pest control is not just about catching rats and mice, and knew that they could go into specialisms like bird work, proofing, drainage, drones.

So what does this tell us? At first glance, it doesn't seem particularly hopeful. But it is a good starting point to overcome some of the obstacles stopping young people from entering the sector. And it will help inform the work the EDI committee does on this subject.

Any ideas?

If you have ideas on ways to drive recruitment and encourage more people into the pest control industry, get in touch with the EDI committee.

membership@bpca.org.uk



Joe Strong, Beaver Pest Control and winner of Young Pest Controller of the Year at the National Pest Awards.

EEZY PEEZY CPDZEE!

HARVESTING CPD POINTS ON THE GO!



BPCA's Head of Technical and PPC Editor, Dee Ward-Thompson caught up with Training and Professional Development Manager Karen Dawes, to talk about reflective learning, unstructured CPD and how you might be gathering CPD points without even realising it.



It's that time of year again and CPD will be on many people's minds – or at least, it should be!

While many of you may worry about how to keep up with your job AND record CPD, we're here to explain how you can easily do both.

It's a common misconception that only formal training counts as CPD, when in fact everything you learn throughout the year can count towards your 20 points. BPCA Registered not only recognises, but actively encourages on-the-job learning.

DWT With the launch of the BPCA Registered App, it's easier than ever to log CPD. As head of the technical department, I'm particularly interested to know if you're seeing an increase in members recording their own CPD for things like technical calls.

KD It's still an area we're looking to improve on. People tend not to automatically recognise that things like technical calls can be counted as CPD but, of course, if you make a technical call you generally have a question. If that question is answered, then you've learned something new. It's all part of keeping your knowledge up-to-date, and we see that as really valuable. How many technical calls would you say you generally get in a week?

DWT Depends on the time of year, but our phones are always fairly busy.

KD Okay, so if each call lasts 30 minutes, that's a lot of CPD that could be recorded across the board. And many people will call the technical helpline more than once, so those points could add up for individuals too.

For those readers who are on BPCA Registered: the system allows technicians to open a diary entry for technical calls and to add to it each time they speak to an advisor. They can even do it on the BPCA Registered app as soon as the call is done. They just need to keep the entry open as a draft, and add to it as and when they seek advice.

When the end of the year rolls around, just publish it and the points will automatically be added.

DWT We do tell members on calls that they can do this, as this type of CPD is so valuable and you don't need to be on a course to get it.

KD That's exactly right, not every bit of learning is done on a formal training course. Technical calls are really valuable because what is discussed is specifically relevant to the caller and the issues they have. They can ask questions, have a discussion and get points clarified by your team, so the learning is really individual to them.

Out of interest, what kind of questions do you get asked?

DWT The calls are so diverse, we get insect and rodent control queries, questions about how to do method statements and environmental risk assessments (ERAs), the list goes on.



KD ERAs are a great case in point, as there are many different elements to the learning that takes place here. First of all, just understanding when and how to complete ERAs is a learning curve that everyone has to travel along. Then, every time you complete one, there's always something different that you have to think about, to consider and reflect on.

DWT So someone can claim CPD whenever they complete an ERA?

KD Wherever and whenever you are learning something new, that can be counted



"...if you're learning something - anything - then that's continued professional development."



as CPD so, theoretically, yes. CPD can be recorded for completing ERAs, and health and safety

assessments are the same because the very nature of contemplating specific risks requires you to learn more about the products, the site or the species.

DWT It's great that BPCA Registered recognises on-the-job learning and has the function to accept unstructured learning like this; I know first-hand how busy being out on the road as a pest technician is. I do still find that some people don't fully know what unstructured CPD is all about though, I guess it's a fairly new thing to the industry?



“Reflective practice is simply saying what you have learned as a result of what you have done...”

I think the misconception comes from the fact that historically CPD was more formal and required you to attend training courses (or more recently, webinars). But it’s one of the reasons BPCA Registered was developed; we recognised that professional development is not generic, it’s personal to every individual and CPD should always reflect the goals and objectives of individuals.

How better to do that than through the use of unstructured learning that’s relevant to how you want to develop your skills and knowledge?

DWT Ah, so as long as we can demonstrate we have learned something, even if it’s just where a certain product can be used by reading the label, or seeking technical advice, this can be logged as CPD?

KD Yes, the only caveat being that you include what we call ‘reflective practice’ when you add your points.

For example, when you see a training course being promoted on BPCA’s website, you will see a number of things that you will learn on the course listed: these are called learning outcomes. It’s what you will learn by doing the training.

Reflective practice is simply saying what you have learned as a result of what you have done, so your learning outcomes.

So if you have completed an ERA, you will be asked “what did you set out to learn” and you might answer “I needed to understand the environmental risks that affected this site”. You will then be asked “What have you learned as a result” and you might answer that “I now understand the risk hierarchy and how it relates to this site, which is a pub by a river”.

DWT What about if I’m on a site and discussing pest control requirements with my client? Could that be CPD?



KD Absolutely, if you are learning about the site and evaluating the best methods to monitor and manage that site, then that is extremely valuable CPD.

DWT So, we just need to make more people aware that there are tons of ways to get your CPD. It’s not a point gathering exercise, it’s about recording your learning journey and development experiences.

KD Exactly! I prefer to think of the CPD requirements in hours rather than points. I think points just encourage us to think in terms of numbers rather than value.

If you think that you need to record 20 hours of development, and that development can take place while you’re out in the field, it suddenly seems less formidable. And the BPCA Registered app allows you to record it in the moment, so to speak.

And the CPD team is always happy to guide members through the process of logging unstructured CPD; we find that once people see how simple it is, they see CPD in a whole new light and understand the value of it.

Having heard from Dee and Karen, are you beginning to see CPD in that new light?
 CPD shouldn’t be seen as a chore to be completed by the end of the year. In an ideal world it should be a collaboration between employer and employee – carefully planned to make sure that both are reaping the benefits of better knowledge, better skills and better long-term outcomes.
 Make your CPD count, and not just by collecting points; make it count by understanding that learning is always going to be part of the job. We hear pest controllers say time and again that no two days are ever the same in this job - well, you’d be surprised by how quickly and easily that can add up to 20 hours of CPD!

KD Well, we’re in our fifth year now and we do get more people taking control of their own CPD in this way, but there’s still loads of work to do to get the word out there. To put it another way: unstructured learning is also known as ‘self-directed’ CPD – it simply means learning that is driven by the individual and it can be quite broad in terms of the activities completed. It can include reading news articles, technical articles, blogs, books, or checking your BPM manual, watching relevant videos and informal discussions such as technical or networking chats.

DWT So basically, it seems like anything you do in your role, if you’re learning, is valuable CPD.

KD Yep, absolutely. As I said before, if you’re learning something – anything – then that’s continued professional development.

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Courses and exams

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Level 2 Award in Pest Management (residential)	1,110.00	✓	11-16/02/2024	Stafford
			18-22/03/2024	Edinburgh
			07-12/04/2024	Stafford
Level 2 Certificate in Pest Management (residential)	1,465.00		10-17/02/2024	Stafford
			06-13/04/2024	Stafford
Hands On Practical Training	165.00		10/02/2024	Stafford
			06/04/2024	Stafford
Principles of Pest Identification	104.50		23/04/2024	Online
			16/07/2024	Online
Bed Bug Control	104.50		25/01/2024	Online
			18/04/2024	Online
Waste Management	104.50		07/05/2024	Online
			05/11/2024	Online
Fundamentals of Rodent Biology	60.50		09/05/2024 1/2 day	Online
			03/10/2024 1/2 day	Online
Fundamentals of Insect Biology	60.50		09/05/2024 1/2 day	Online
			03/10/2024 1/2 day	Online
Root Cause Analysis for Pest Technicians and Field Biologists	60.50		02/05/2024 1/2 day	Online
			10/10/2024 1/2 day	Online
Mole Control	60.50		19/12/2023 1/2 day	Online
			23/02/2024 1/2 day	Online
			16/04/2024 1/2 day	Online
			01/08/2024 1/2 day	Online
			21/11/2024 1/2 day	Online
Certificate in Bird Management	104.50	✓	15/11/2023	Online
			22/02/2024	Online
			23/05/2024	Online
			26/09/2024	Online
Formulations and Applications	104.50		21/11/2023	Online
			16/05/2024	Online
			19/09/2024	Online
Stored Product Insects (SPIs) in Food Factory Environments	104.50		20/03/2024	Online
			18/07/2024	Online
Introduction to Wildlife Management	104.50		09/01/2024	Online
			07/03/2024	Online
			27/06/2024	Online
Aluminium Phosphide	341.00	✓	26+27/03/2024	Southwick
			02+03/03/2024	Southwick
Becoming a Field Biologist or Technical Inspector	104.50		13/12/2023	Online
			25/03/2024	Online
Starting Out in Pest Control	104.50		08/05/2024	Online
			07/12/2023	Online
Level 3 Award in Safe Use of Fumigants for the Management of Invertebrate Pests	858.00	✓	13-16/05/2024	Derby
			25-28/11/2024	Derby
Steps to Leadership Management	209.00		23+29/11/2023	Online
			11+18/03/2024	Online
Grey Squirrel Control	60.50		22/03/2024	TBC
			05/07/2024	Online
Flies and their Controls	104.50		01/05/2024	Online
Non-native Pests and their Control	60.50		11/01/2024	Online
			11/07/2024	Online

Exams only

Exam	From (£)	Date	Location
RSPH Level 2 Award in Pest Management	170.50	21/11/2023	Manchester
		08/12/2023	Stafford
		16/02/2024	Stafford
		22/03/2024	Edinburgh
		21/11/2023	Manchester
Technical Inspector Exam	170.50	08/12/2023	Stafford
		16/02/2024	Stafford
		22/03/2024	Edinburgh
		21/11/2023	Manchester
RSPH Level 3 Award in the Safe Use of Fumigants for the Management of Invertebrate Pests	335.50	08/12/2023	Stafford
		16/02/2024	Stafford
		22/03/2024	Edinburgh
		16/02/2024	Derby
Certificated Field Biologist	335.50	12/04/2024	Derby
		12/12/2024	Derby
Certificated Advanced Technician (CAT) in Pest Management	294.00	Book anytime	Online

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