

Greater London Pest Liaison Group  
Good Practice Guide



# Beating Bedbugs

Information  
for Landlords &  
Property Managers



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## What are they and how do they live?

Bedbugs are brown, blood-feeding insects, measuring up to 6mm long. They are active mainly at night.

They hide in crevices on the bed, and also behind skirting boards, under loose wall-paper etc. Bedbugs can survive up to a year without a blood-feed.

Bedbugs may be introduced to a building on second-hand beds or furniture, or on personal possessions.



## What problems do they cause?

Bedbug bites cause red, irritating marks.

A few people develop a more severe reaction.

Bedbugs **do not** spread any diseases.

Infestations may spread to adjoining

flats, and can eventually infest whole blocks.

Untreated bedbug infestations in rented property will quickly result in dissatisfied tenants, have a significant financial impact, and result in damage to your reputation.

## As a landlord, am I responsible for dealing with infestation?

The Housing Act 2004 states that *“residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor”*.

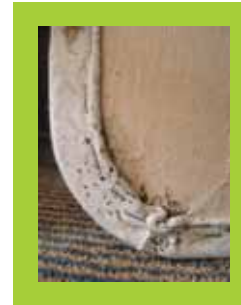
If bedbug infestation prevents a property meeting this standard, then local authorities may take action under:

- The Public Health Act 1936, Section 83;
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 80;
- The Housing Act 2004.

If you suspect bedbug problems in accommodation for which you are responsible, you are strongly advised to contact your local Environmental Health Department immediately.

## How can I reduce the chance of infestation in my property?

Ensure that you and your staff are familiar with the signs of bed bug infestation, and how to respond.



Do not relocate any furniture from infested flats.

Inspect vacant properties for infestation before the next tenant moves in.

Avoid taking in second-hand bedroom furniture.

## How do I know if my property has bedbugs?

Tenants complaining of bites.

Blood-smears around the bed.

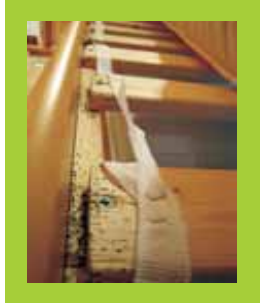
Clusters of dark spots (about 1mm diameter) on the bed frame, edges of the mattress, etc.

Finding insects around the bed.

## What should I do if I suspect my property has bedbugs?

Seek professional help immediately. The longer you leave it, the worse it will become.

Contact your local authority pest control section or a professional pest control company, for advice and treatment.



Self treatment is very unlikely to be successful.

Do not relocate any furniture from infested flats. Infested furniture requiring disposal should first be treated by the pest control officer.

## Professional inspection and treatment

The pest control officer will need access to both the infested room and adjoining units. You should liaise with your tenants to ensure full access.

Before treatment, rooms will need preparation by the tenant. This involves for example, stripping linen from the beds and emptying drawers and cupboards. Linen may need laundering.



Your pest control officer will tell you what is required. Ensure that the rooms are prepared, before the pest control officer arrives.

If you have tenants who are unable to prepare the rooms themselves, you should liaise with relatives or agencies to ensure that this is carried out in time.

Follow all guidance given to you by the pest control officer.

## What records should I keep?

Landlords should keep records of all reports of bed bug infestation in their premises, and of their response.

## Do you need further information?

**For further advice on bedbug control contact your local authority Environmental Health Department.**

For more information on bedbugs, see the GLPLG's good practice guides on:

- *Information for Residents;*
- *Preparing Your Home for Bedbug Treatment.*

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## What is the Greater London Pest Liaison Group?

The Greater London Pest Liaison Group is a voluntary Group comprising members from within the Pest Control Departments of a number of Local Authorities from within Greater London. The objective of the Group is to maintain high standards of pest control and to disseminate sound technical information.

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This document has been prepared by the Greater London Pest Liaison Group and is intended for use by those responsible for the management of accommodation. Whilst it has been produced with great care, the publishers cannot accept any liability for inaccuracies or errors herein.

