



Rat warning to businesses

Karen Pickwick | February 17, 2021

Rat infestations in empty and closed buildings in the UK have reached ‘biblical levels’, pest controllers say. They are warning landlords and building owners to check premises for infestations well before lockdown restrictions ease.

“The big worry is when shops, restaurants and offices are unlocked in preparation for openings over the next few months, that business owners are going to discover fairly advanced infestations of rats and mice”, said Jenny Rathbone from Pest.co.uk. The big freeze, lockdowns and food stockpiling have created the ideal environment for rats and mice to enjoy a little quiet time in vacant buildings – and because many were quickly locked and left, the worry is that infestations will have taken hold. “Rats will always find something to eat – even a leather sofa will do. So, any property with food left around will attract a rodent and empty buildings and shops are ideal. Rats climb up wastewater pipes easily, and once in an empty building can breed like crazy and cause major damage.” Rats especially are bad news in any commercial building as they chew wires, internet cables, keyboards and electrical wiring.

Their bite is in fact six times stronger, relative to their size, than a great white shark and the damage can be severe. Pest controllers have even seen evidence of cunning rats moving a crisp packet and placing it over a glue trap, to enable them to travel across it without being caught. With the closure of food outlets, meaning less food on the street - rats have had to adapt to their new world, moving around to live in empty commercial properties, locked and left by businesses closed by lockdown. “The worry now is that when lockdown restrictions are eased, and businesses tentatively open up again, that the growing populations of rodents will be discovered. We are gearing up for a busy year in 2021,” said Jenny.

“As always being pro-active is the best solution but, failing that, I’d just recommend anyone responsible for a commercial property which has been left empty is to check over their premises well in advance of opening.”