

The Bolton News

"HUGE INCREASE" IN RATS IN BOLTON, SAYS LOCAL PEST CONTROLLER

By Daniel Hopkins

A PEST controller in Bolton has shared tips on how to prevent rat infestations in homes and gardens following a surge in demand for his services.

Andrew Smith, who has been a pest controller for the last three years, said his business, Bolton Pest Control and Prevention, has received a “huge increase” in domestic calls.

He believes it tracks back to the initial lockdown when tips were closed - with many people allowing waste to pile up in their back yards.

He said: “There are a lot of hungry rats that are appearing in places they’ve never been before. Rat numbers are on the increase and when we changed our habits during lockdown - so did the rats.

“Most of the calls I have received lately for rat issues are from people who haven’t had a problem with them before. Hungry rats will travel to locate food and if they find it once, then they will return. And if they find a constant food source then they will nest close to it to minimise exposure to predators.

“An example of this is a home with a garden which feeds birds and has decking or a shed. Rats love decking and sheds as they provide them with overhead protection from predators and bad weather, while giving them a place to multiply.”

Andrew said a drains company he works with usually deals with around a dozen rat cases a year - but he is now passing on cases to them twice a week.

He added that he had seen a particular increase in cases in areas such as Farnworth, Great Lever and Deane.

His advice includes not leaving waste piled up in garden - “harbourage” which rats can use to multiply in, as well as ensuring bins are closed. Bird feeders should be rat-secure and damaged brick work on houses repaired.

Lockdown has led to a 30m increase in the UK rat population, a nationwide pest control company has previously claimed. Due to lockdown where rats have enjoyed the tranquility of quiet urban areas with plenty of waste food, the rat population has grown to 150m in 2020.