



## **Rat population could explode in 2021 including rodents 'super resistant' to poison**

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Rat numbers have boomed in Britain's cities as they have become immune to popular vermin-busting poisons, according to new data.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, the UK's rat population has soared by 25%, according to pest controller Pest.co.uk. 150 million are now thought to be wreaking havoc where people live rather than work, they say.

With lockdown measures shutting down offices, shops and restaurants, rats have migrated from city centre commercial areas to the most deprived inner city residential communities.

Pest.co.uk says potential cuts to pest control services, as is currently discussed by councils, could hit the poorest hardest in 2021.

Jenny Rathbone of Pest.co.uk said: "Lockdown is presenting a serious challenge for pest controllers, none more so than where financial cuts and social distancing is hampering Local Authority departments in their ability to tackle rat populations.

"This is not only a funding issue – the population of rats is growing, and the ability to control them with traditional means is decreasing as 74% of UK rats have been shown to carry immunity to popular poisons."

Even more worrying in some parts of the UK is that 20% of rats have two different genes, making them super resistant to exterminating chemicals.

Bridgend has experienced a staggering 47% increase in reports of rat problems since 2016.

Cardiff is suffering a similar problem, Gill Lewis from Caerphilly County Borough Council stated: "There has been a significant increase in pest control requests since March 2020 because more people are at home and seeing more pest activity than they usually would."

Rathbone added: "The big problem we face is that residents of more deprived inner-city areas tend to use Local Authority services to treat rodent problems, and it's these areas rats are moving to during lockdown – any cuts to services will end up impacting the poorest the hardest – and we all know cuts are coming.

2021 could be interesting. The longer the lockdown continues, the higher the risk that rats get a real foothold that will be hard to control come summer."