


Bedbugs: guidance for residential accommodation and conducting home visits

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1. Purpose

This procedure details bedbugs which are responsible for environmental infestations and minor irritant to humans. Prompt recognition is important for the control and management of these infestations.

2. Scope

This procedure is especially relevant for:

- Residential accommodation and care homes
- Community and home visiting
- Direct care services

3. Policy relevant legislation

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended)

4. What are bedbugs



Bedbugs are small, oval, brownish insects that live on the blood of animals or humans. Adult bedbugs are around 5mm long and have flat bodies about the size of an apple seed. After feeding, however, their bodies swell and are a reddish colour.

Bedbugs do not fly, but they can move quickly over floors, walls, and ceilings. Female bedbugs may lay hundreds of eggs, each of which is about the size of a speck of dust, over a lifetime.

Immature bedbugs, called nymphs, shed their skins five times before reaching maturity and require a meal of blood before each shedding. Under favourable

conditions the bugs can develop fully in as little as a month and produce three or more generations per year.

Although they are a nuisance, they do not transmit diseases.



Bedbug bites can be red and itchy and they're often in a line or cluster. Bedbug bites usually clear up on their own in a week or so. Things you can do include:

- Putting something cool, like a clean, damp cloth, on the affected area to help with the itching and any swelling.
- Keeping the affected area clean.
- Not scratching the bites to avoid getting an infection.
- Using a mild steroid cream like hydrocortisone cream (Pregnant women must get advice from a doctor before using hydrocortisone cream).
- Antihistamines – these may help if the bites are very itchy and you're unable to sleep.

5. Where bedbugs can be found

Bedbugs may enter in a home undetected through luggage, clothing, used beds and couches, and other items. Their flattened bodies make it possible for them to fit into tiny spaces, about the width of a credit card. Bedbugs do not have nests like ants or bees but tend to live in groups in hiding places. Their initial hiding places are typically in mattresses, box springs, bed frames, and headboards where they have easy access to people to bite in the night.

6. How bedbugs can be transferred from one place to another

Staff (e.g., social care workers) who routinely visit residents' homes or those who work in residential settings are at risk for contracting bedbugs. These staff need to be especially bedbug conscious if they are to avoid transporting bedbugs in their cars, taking bedbugs into the office, or even taking bedbug's home with them. Staff must also be aware of transporting bedbugs from one resident to another. Where there is an increased risk of bedbugs staff should wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and follow the below guidance to prevent transference.

7. Conducting home visits

Bringing up the subject of bed bugs can be a delicate matter. Staff will need to use their professional judgment and knowledge of the resident and environment when assessing the risk of bedbugs. If you are visiting a residential care home, you can check with the onsite care team.

If bedbugs were a problem within the last 12 months, you can take precautions to protect yourself and other people you may be visiting before arriving at the potentially infested residence.

If the presence of bedbugs is known or suspected:

- Wear disposable shoe covers at all times or at least when you are uncertain about the presence of an infestation in the resident's home.



- Coveralls or a plastic suit can be worn if you are entering a home where you know there is a severe infestation. Coveralls should also be considered if you know that you will be moving or carrying items, like a wheelchair from an infested home. Coveralls should also be worn if you are physically moving people or animals from an infested home.
- Do not sit on upholstered furniture or the bed. Take a quick look in the cracks of hard chairs before sitting down.
- Carry only those items with you that are essential to the home visit. Leave everything else in the car.
- A plastic clipboard can be used to hold your paperwork. A small plastic bag can be used to hold your wallet, personal items, spare gloves, and boots.
- Avoid placing anything on upholstered furniture, bedding, or on carpeted floors.
- If you discover bedbugs in the home during your visit, this should be raised with the manager and/or resident.

After your visit:

- Record the infestation on case notes (LAS/LCS) and add a warning flag so you and your colleagues will be aware and prepared for the next visit.
- When you return to your vehicle or upon leaving the home, remove your disposable shoe covers immediately and dispose of them in a bin before you get in your care or seal them in a plastic bag for disposal later.
- If you were wearing coveralls, remove it by turning inside out to trap any bedbugs inside. Place the suit in a sealed plastic bag and dispose of it before you get in the vehicle.

- Have a hand mirror handy so that you can perform a quick self-inspection. Check your clothing - the back of your trousers, tread of your shoes, shoelaces, socks, cuffs, and collar.
- If you find an insect on yourself (bedbug or other i.e. cockroach). Use a “wet wipe” to capture the insect. Use another to wipe down the surrounding area, paying attention to seams, buttons and other bedbug hiding places. Wipe downs are not necessary if you do not find any bugs during your self-inspection.

If You are Repeatedly Visiting Infested Homes:

If you frequently visit clients who have bed bug infestations, it is a good idea to keep a simple “bedbug kit” in your car or have a team grab-pack available for staff use.

At the simplest level, this kit can consist of a plastic box with lid, wet wipes, and large plastic bags.

The following items may also be useful:

- A small plastic bag for holding personal items like your identification, mobile phone, additional boots, or gloves.
- A change of clothes and shoes (kept in your vehicle)
- A plastic storage container with a sealed lid that is large enough to contain the items listed below or items that you might suspect to be infested.
- Shoe covers and coveralls.
- Disposable gloves
- A roll of duct tape (light coloured) to help capture and see any bedbugs.
- Small plastic garbage bags
- Flashlight to help see bedbugs.
- Wet wipes (i.e., Antibacterial)
- Plastic box-type clipboard containing paper and pens.

Staff must always use PPE where there is a known or suspected case of bedbugs present.

Staff can refuse to enter a home where they have no PPE however must return at the earliest opportunity with the right PPE required to carry out the assessment or intervention.

Bedbugs and hoarding

Controlling bed bug infestations in a hoarder situation can be extremely challenging. By definition, a hoarder is a person who accumulates things and hides them away for future use; someone who collects things that have been discarded by others. Bed bugs prefer to harbour close to their hosts and hoarders generally refuse to part with possessions.

This unfortunate scenario provides large amounts of bed bug hiding places close to the bed bug host. In addition, the person’s possessions and clutter totally interfere

with any control measures. The best means to gain control is first, to exhaust all attempts to reduce possessions and clutter via a thorough clean.

After reducing clutter, a referral to pest control must be considered. Be aware that under hoarder conditions, 100% control is unlikely and the cycle may have to be repeated over time unless you can either remove most of the possessions and clutter or the move the person to another home. As always, it is important that you record efforts made and discuss with carers and management to agree the best strategy.

8. Dealing with infestations

Personal Contamination

If you think you have been contaminated with bedbugs, notify your manager of the source, and return to your home. Remove all clothing before entering the home if possible (or in the bathroom if not). Immediately place your clothing in sealed plastic bags. Get into the shower. After showering, collect your sealed items and place them in the washer with hot soapy water. Place shoes in a hot dryer for 30 minutes. Dry your clothes on high heat.

Remember: on-person infestations are uncommon.

Self-cleaning

There are few steps you can take straight away to try and manage a small bedbug problem.

1. Inspect – check bedbug hot spots such as mattress seams, bed frames, headboards, along the edge of carpets, and nearby furniture (wardrobes, drawers, armchairs, sofas) for live insects.
2. Wash – wash infected bedding at high temperature of at least 60°C for ideally 90 minutes minimum.
3. Heat – If possible, place items into a tumble dryer for a minimum 30-minute cycle.
4. Vacuum – vacuum your bed, mattress, and any area near to where you have spotted bedbugs. Use the hose-nozzle attachments to clean along walls and around edges. Afterwards, take the vacuum outside of the property to empty into an outside bin and seal securely.

Although these steps can help to control the problem, they do not guarantee to eliminate a bed bug infestation completely. The most effective solution for complete bed bug eradication is by an expert, professionally qualified pest controller.

Professional Pest Control and Eradication (recommended)

For private residences then contact the local district or city council for advice.

For Oxfordshire County Council buildings contact:

FM servicedesk@oxfordshire.gov.uk to arrange for professional pest control services.

9. Links

[Bedbugs - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

10. Equality diversity and inclusion

The council will regularly monitor and review the impact of this policy and procedure.

The council needs to consider the equality, diversity and inclusion impact of its HR policies and procedures on its employees and in some cases, a formal EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) may not always be appropriate. For any queries on this, please contact the HR Policy Manager in the first instance or email equalities@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

11. Variation of policy and procedure

This policy and procedure are subject to ongoing review and may be varied by the council from time to time. Examples of variation include the need to comply with new legislation or best practice guidance.