



NORTH STAR

Creating homes, building futures

Pest Control Policy 2026

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By:	Head of Property and Compliance

1. Introduction

Northstar Housing Group is committed to ensuring that all homes provided are safe, secure, and fit for habitation. The presence of pests can pose significant risks to health, wellbeing, and the condition of properties. This policy establishes a clear and consistent framework for the prevention, identification, and management of pest infestations across Northstar Housing Group's housing stock.

This policy aligns with the requirements of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, relevant environmental health legislation, and the Housing Ombudsman's guidance on pest management. It also reflects the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards and the emerging requirements under Awaab's Law and the wider Hazards in Social Housing framework.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all rented properties managed by Northstar Housing Group, including communal areas and shared spaces. It covers all employees, contractors, and agents acting on behalf of the organisation. The policy addresses infestations of pests that may pose a risk to health, safety, or property.

3. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a pest is defined as any organism that may cause harm to health, damage to property, or interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of a home.

4. Policy Principles

Northstar Housing Group adopts a proactive and risk-based approach to pest control. Reports of pest infestations will be acknowledged and investigated within appropriate timescales, with priority given to cases involving significant health risks or vulnerable residents.

Responsibility for pest control will be determined based on the underlying cause of the infestation, including whether it arises from structural defects, environmental conditions, or resident behaviour. Clear communication will be maintained with residents throughout, ensuring they understand the outcome of inspections, actions to be taken, and any preventative measures required.

The organisation is committed to acting fairly, transparently, and with empathy, recognising that pest issues can cause distress. Consideration will be given to residents with vulnerabilities, and responses will be adapted

accordingly. Where necessary, follow-up action will be undertaken to ensure infestations are effectively resolved and do not recur.

5. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Northstar Housing Group will meet its obligations under:

- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Environmental Protection legislation

Pest infestations may constitute a hazard under the HHSRS where they present a risk to health or safety.

5.1 Consumer Standards

This policy supports compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including:

- Safety and Quality Standard, by ensuring homes are safe and free from hazards such as pest infestations linked to disrepair
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, by ensuring clear communication with residents and accessible reporting routes
- Tenancy Standard, by setting out expectations for resident responsibilities

5.2 Awaab's Law and Hazards in Social Housing

Northstar Housing Group recognises the strengthened expectations introduced through Awaab's Law and the broader Hazards in Social Housing reforms. While primarily focused on damp and mould, these requirements reinforce the need for landlords to address hazards, including pest infestations, in a timely and effective manner.

In line with these expectations, Northstar Housing Group will:

- Investigate potential hazards promptly upon notification
- Take timely action to remove or mitigate risks to health
- Ensure that no resident is left living in conditions that may pose a serious health risk
- Maintain clear records of reports, inspections, and actions taken

The response timescales set out in this policy reflect these emerging statutory expectations.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Landlord Responsibilities

Northstar Housing Group is responsible for maintaining the structure and exterior of its properties, including walls, roofs, drains, and pipework. Where a pest infestation is attributable to structural defects, disrepair, or conditions within communal areas, the organisation will arrange inspection, treatment, and any necessary remedial works.

Where infestations affect multiple properties or originate from shared spaces, Northstar Housing Group will coordinate an appropriate response. This reflects established good practice, where infestations arising from disrepair fall within the landlord's remit .

6.2 Resident Responsibilities

Residents are expected to maintain their homes in a clean and hygienic condition, dispose of waste appropriately, and report pest issues promptly. Residents must also allow access for inspections and treatment.

Where infestations arise due to resident actions or omissions, including poor housekeeping or the introduction of pests into the property, responsibility for treatment may rest with the resident.

6.3 Shared Responsibility

In some circumstances, responsibility for pest control may be shared. In such cases, Northstar Housing Group will adopt a coordinated and proportionate approach, ensuring that responsibilities are clearly explained.

7. Reporting, Response and Timescales

Residents may report pest infestations through standard reporting channels. Upon receipt, Northstar Housing Group will assess the severity and risk associated with the infestation and respond in line with the following timescales:

Priority	Description	Response Timescale
Emergency	Severe infestation posing an immediate risk to health or safety	Within 24 hours
Urgent	Active infestation with potential to spread or worsen (aligned with Awaab's Law Phase 2 expectations)	Within 5 working days
Routine	Minor or isolated infestations with limited immediate risk	Within 20 working days

Inspections will be undertaken where required to determine the nature, extent, and cause of the infestation. Where landlord responsibility applies, treatment will be arranged through qualified contractors and any necessary repairs undertaken.

8. Pest Responsibility

Responsibility for pest control will depend on the type of pest and the cause of the infestation. Northstar Housing Group will generally take responsibility for the following pests where they are linked to structural issues, communal areas, or multiple properties:

Pest Type	Typical Responsibility
Rats and mice	Landlord where linked to disrepair, communal areas, or building defects
Cockroaches	Landlord where infestation is widespread or linked to building condition
Wasps (nests attached to building structure or in communal areas)	Landlord
Birds (where nesting causes property damage or access issues)	Landlord
Fleas (in communal areas)	Landlord

Northstar Housing Group will not normally take responsibility for pests that are part of the natural environment or arise due to lifestyle factors. These include bees, bats, badgers, foxes, ants, flies, spiders, and similar insects. In such cases, residents will be expected to manage the issue, although advice and guidance may be provided.

Where responsibility is unclear, Northstar Housing Group will investigate and determine the appropriate course of action based on evidence and risk.

9. Communal Areas

Northstar Housing Group retains full responsibility for pest control within communal areas. Infestations will be investigated promptly, with treatment arranged and monitored to ensure effective resolution.

10. Prevention

Northstar Housing Group will take reasonable steps to prevent pest infestations by maintaining properties in good repair and addressing potential entry points. Residents will be supported with guidance on preventative measures within their homes.

11. Vulnerability and Support

Northstar Housing Group recognises that some residents may be more vulnerable to pest infestations due to personal circumstances. A supportive and flexible approach will be taken, with consideration given to individual needs and any relevant support services. Any action will be proportionate and reasonable.

12. Recharge of Costs

Costs may be recharged to residents where an infestation is attributable to their actions or failure to meet tenancy obligations. Any such decision will be evidence-based and clearly communicated.

13. Complaints

Residents who are dissatisfied with the handling of a pest issue may raise a complaint through Northstar Housing Group's complaints procedure. Complaints will be managed in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

14. Equality and Diversity

Northstar Housing Group is committed to ensuring that this policy is applied fairly and consistently, with due regard to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with legislation, regulatory expectations, and best practice. Performance will be monitored through service delivery outcomes, resident feedback, complaint data, and learning from Housing Ombudsman determinations.