



Rodenticide best practice in practice

"Is there any other way?" asks David Parnell

David Parnell runs a successful pest control business taking an approach which fits perfectly with the new Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) UK Code of Practice. So what's his secret?

A complete change of career after 35 years in the motor industry saw David Parnell set up his pest control business in 2004. Born and raised in North London, David had enjoyed problem solving in his job as a mechanical engineer but was looking for a new and bigger challenge. And so began the process of training as a pest controller, an occupation in which his trouble shooting capabilities are put to the test daily.

Responsible client-centred approach

A member of the BASIS PROMPT register, David is an enthusiastic advocate of a responsible, client-centred approach to rodent control. From the outset, rather than follow conventional methodology, David has employed the same principles in his pest control business as he did in engineering.

He thoroughly researches each situation he is called to, applies common sense and tries to get to the origin of a pest problem rather than using a temporary fix, which otherwise would result in the client needing to call him out repeatedly. Using this 'permanent solution where possible' business model has earned him quite a reputation for effective work at minimal cost to clients via avoidance of unnecessary repeat visits.

According to David, the quick and easy approach of simply placing rodenticide baits at various points and doing little else is nothing short of an expensive and unprofessional sticking plaster. He adds



A case in point

Over a five-year period, the distraught owners in one half of a very nice semi-detached property in Hertfordshire had spent over £1,500 on unsuccessful site visits by several pest control companies, environmental health officers, water and gas supplier officials.

Many kilogrammes of rodenticide had been put down and consumed by the rats. Decomposing carcasses ensued, but the rat problem returned repeatedly causing serious electrical and plumbing damage.

David explains: "Within an hour of surveying the property and drains, I diagnosed the problem to be originating from the adjoining property."

"After some resistance and denial of any problem from their half of the building, the neighbours finally agreed to allow an inspection of the drains."

The pictures, right, show before and after images of what David discovered and the repair he effected.

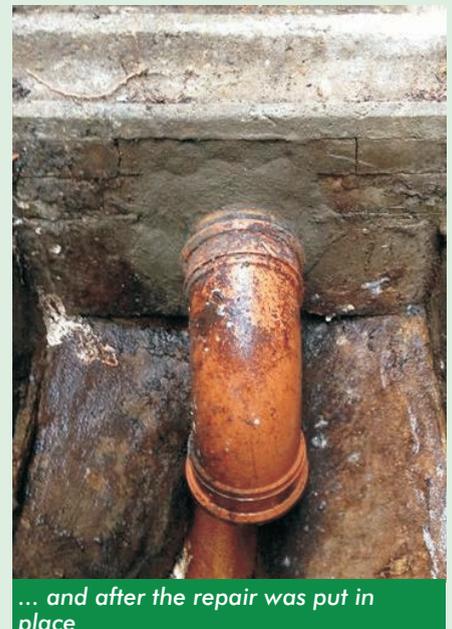
He adds: "Within one hour, the repair was

completed and a trapping procedure put in place to clear up any remaining rats in the building's structure.

"Minimal rodenticide was used and one final rat was trapped two days later – job done!



The state of the drain before David Parnell's visit...



... and after the repair was put in place

that the key issues with that method include unnecessary repeat visits and well-known risks to wildlife.

Over the past three years, call-outs to deal with rodents in domestic property have increased eight-fold to an average six per week. He says 98% of surface rat infestations are drainage related, so a drain survey is usually the place to start.

His approach demonstrates daily application of the recently published *CRRU UK Code of Best Practice*. David believes the new Code will stimulate real and lasting change for all pest control companies, moving them away from permanent baiting as the primary solution to rodent control.

Permanent solution

In contrast, David looks to solve the problem permanently. His strategy for rats is to establish first where they have come from, then close off the infestation at source. A typical call out involves an 'all risks' analysis combining environmental and COSHH risk assessments and clearly laying out his thoughts and findings to the client.

Once the agreed programme of work has been implemented, he makes follow-up visits and, for commercial premises, encourages

on-site staff to get involved and take responsibility. Repeat visits are made to monitor progress and check that his recommendations are being followed. If rodenticide has been used, this can be as frequently as every second day.

David's growing reputation finds him not only being called in to resolve rodent issues in central London office blocks, but also to deal with pest-related issues within the transport network system serving the capital. Back in his home town of Cheshunt, David also works with the local authority to resolve stubborn pest control issues. As a result of this involvement and, keen to put something back into his community, he has drawn up a mentoring programme to assist the local authority's pest control technicians to emulate his 'Code of Best Practice' style of working.

Working with his son and one other employee, David's philosophy is that as a small business he can maintain professional consistency and provide an efficient personal service to his clients. He uses a friendly but firm approach to educating clients in responsible rodent control. According to David, educating the public also has a place if the industry is going to



David Parnell expects the CRRU Code to push pest control in the right direction

change the impression that the only way to deal with rodents is simply to put down bait boxes. One aspect of this education is to regularly give talks to children in local schools.

He is resolute that the guidelines in the *CRRU UK Code of Best Practice* mirror the way he has been running his business since its inception, with the emphasis on long-term results through the application of best practice.

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