

## Moths



# Bolton Council

## Species

There are three common species of moth that we see as pests in the home are;

- The clothes moth
- The brown house moth
- The white-shouldered house moth.

They feed on materials containing wool or woven fibres, fur and feathers, and even fertilisers, causing physical damage as well as contamination.

### What is the difference between these moths?

- The clothes moth is the smallest of the three moths, being pale beige or straw coloured. There are no spots or marks on the wings. Clothes moths do not often fly; they tend to move by running or occasionally jumping.
- The brown house moths are mottled and darker than the clothes moths, commonly found in food stores and homes. They prefer kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms and any place where adequate food supplies can be found.
- The white shouldered house moth is paler than the brown house moth, but can be distinguished from the clothes moth by its obvious white head and "shoulders". These moths do not often feed on fabrics, but they are attracted to dust and debris that is collected under carpets.

### Is it the adult moths that do the damage to clothes and carpets?

No, it is the larvae (caterpillars or grubs) that cause the damage. The larvae are usually creamy white with a darker head. The mother has a four-stage life cycle: egg, larva, pupa and adult. The larval stage can last up to six months, but adult moths only live for two to three weeks. Adult female moths lay their eggs amongst fibres which will form the food for the larvae when they hatch before forming a pupa.

### What attracts them?

Moths are attracted to woollen fabrics, and carpets stained with food, perspiration or urine.



### How can I prevent an infestation?

- Wash clothes regularly, and make sure they are clean before replacing them in cupboards and drawers - by doing this you should also reduce the risk of damage by moths.
- Woollen items should be sealed in plastic bags or stored in closed cupboards.
- Dispose of contaminated foodstuffs correctly, keeping all food waste tightly sealed in bags or bins.
- Thoroughly clean up any spilled foods and regularly clean storage cupboards

### Control

- You can treat your carpets with residual insecticides specifically made for this purpose and frequent use of the vacuum cleaner on your carpets should reduce the risk of infestation.
- You may find moth grub damage to carpets under heavy furniture, and spraying with the insecticide here every six months or so should help.
- Moth larvae cannot survive in bright lights, so you can air clothes, blankets and easily removable furnishings outside on a sunny day. Give them a good shake or brushing before you put them away again. Ideally we would recommend you seek professional help if you do have an infestation.
- **Professional Help;** Your Local Authority can provide a service for the removal of squirrels from inside properties, however, there may be a charge involved). Alternatively, commercial pest control companies are listed in Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.

**When using pesticides always follow the instructions on the label**

