Some people find it difficult looking after themselves and their property. This may be for a number of reasons, including, mental health problems, drug or alcohol problems, extreme old age, or physical disability. In some situations someone may have relied completely on their partner to carry out domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning only for their partner to leave or pass away, leaving them unable to cope.

This may lead to the property becoming untidy and dirty, and whilst not ideal this would not be serious enough for us to become involved (although it may be appropriate for other Departments such as Social Services to become involved). However, in some cases this may progress to a situation where urine and faeces begin to be found in places other than the toilet bowl, and/or the presence of food waste has led to infestations of rats, mice, flies etc. Should conditions deteriorate to this level then we would become involved due to the associated public health risks.

We normally become aware of such cases by referral from Social Services or Housing Association Support Officers; however, sometimes people slip through the net and only come to our attention when concerned neighbours or relatives contact us. If you are aware of a case similar to this that may require our attention then please contact us on 01978 298989. Alternatively, you can email us at contact-us@wrexham.gov.uk

Once we have been notified of a problem such as this we will arrange to inspect the property in order to identify works which may be necessary these may include:

- Removal of decaying foodstuff
- Removal or destruction of rats
- Removal of faeces and urine
- Cleansing and disinfection of interior surfaces
- Removal of contaminated wallpaper, carpets, furniture if cleansing is not appropriate
- Painting interior surfaces
A notice would then be served on the occupier under Section 83 of the Public Health Act 1936 requiring the necessary work to be carried out within a specified timescale (Section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 or Section 4 of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 may also be used).

Quite often the occupiers are unwilling or unable to arrange for the necessary works to be carried out. Should this be the case then we would arrange for contractors to carry out the necessary works in default, recharging the cost of this work to the occupier.

We understand that many of the people we deal with in such cases are vulnerable, and we therefore aim to deal with them as sensitively as possible, offering help and advice where we can.

**FURTHER ADVICE**

To obtain further advice on filthy or verminous properties please contact the Environment and Planning Department:

Telephone: 01978 298989
Email: contact-us@wrexham.gov.uk