

PUBLIC PROTECTION – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Pest advice - Booklice

What do they look like?

Booklice are approximately 2mm in length. They have soft bodies and are usually white, pale grey or sometimes black in colour.



Where do they live?

Often found in houses, food stores and libraries. Can also be found in cereal products, old books and the fabric of old furniture which may have been attacked by mould. Booklice can be brought into the home in a variety of ways, they may come in with food or in the food packaging, or with second hand goods such as carpets or clothes.

What do they eat?

Booklice feed on microscopic moulds and mildews associated with high humidity, which can be found in leather, carpets, books, plaster and food.

Pest status

Booklice are not pests of public health significance. They do not bite humans, nor are they likely to transmit disease. However, they can contaminate stored foods with their waste products, and can cause damage to paper packaging or books by their feeding action.

Control measures:

Hygiene

Any food commodities that are found to be infested with booklice should be discarded. Unopened packets of food should be inspected thoroughly paying particular attention to labels and openings.

Insecticide control

Before carrying out an insecticide treatment against booklice, the humidity in the infested area should be reduced to less than 50 per cent as this may eradicate the problem. If trouble persists, use crawling insect aerosol suitable for use near food. Always read the instruction label.

Professional advice & treatment

Powys County Council does not undertake treatment for book lice. Commercial pest control companies are listed on the internet in the Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.