

SQUIRREL INFORMATION SHEET

Grey squirrels were introduced from the USA between the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century and are now common throughout England and Wales. Although it was initially thought that grey squirrels had led to the demise of our native red squirrels, it is now generally considered that red squirrels were already in decline due to loss of suitable habitat, and/or disease, and that the appearance of grey squirrels was coincidental to this. Red squirrels are a rare and protected species, although there is apparently some evidence of an increase in numbers in recent years.

Grey squirrels generally cause more serious problems for various professionals, for example, forestry workers and park keepers (tree damage), and market gardeners (cereals, vegetables and fruit taken). However, whilst many people may see grey squirrels as a pleasant part of wildlife in their local community, the increasing spread of grey squirrels in urban areas may also be a cause of nuisance to other individuals/families.

For the property owner/occupier, grey squirrels can cause damage to the structure of buildings (roof timbers, insulation, etc) and services (wiring, plumbing, etc) if they gain access, especially into roof spaces, not to mention the noise caused by their activities.

Prevention and Control

Please note that Kirklees Council does not provide a service in relation to squirrel control.

In common with other pest problems, prevention is better than cure. Grey squirrels will take advantage of any gaps that would allow access into a building, particularly into a roof space. Check for any such gaps during routine maintenance and carry out any appropriate preventative work.

If squirrels have already become resident in your property, make sure that you only complete work to keep them out when you are certain that the squirrels are outside. Also, you may need to cut back any tree branches which grow near to or overhang the property that allow squirrels an easy route to reach their access point into the building. However, **before** taking any action, be sure to check that there are no preservation orders in force on any trees to be cut back.

If you are unable to carry out the necessary work yourself, you may need the assistance of a local builder and/or tree surgeon.

Squirrel control is difficult and complicated, especially in urban environments, as grey squirrels are the subject of much legislation in this respect. If you believe that you have a squirrel nuisance problem, it is recommended that you seek advice from professional, private sector pest controllers with experience of dealing with these animals.