

## Selling IPM – Pest awareness in times of change

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### Introduction

The National Archives (TNA) are the official archive for the UK government. We are the guardians of over 1,000 years of history. Our collections consist of approximately 12.5 million records which are stored across two sites. We have 20 repositories in all, totalling 120 km of shelving. Led by the Collection Care Department, the organisation has employed a successful Integrated Pest Management programme since 2007. Our document storage areas are well-managed, pest numbers are low, and the measures we have in place have reduced the likelihood of an infestation.



### The Impact of Change

As part of a drive to attract more on-site visitors, the way our public spaces are used has changed. Food and drink are purchased, consumed and disposed of in areas where this was once prohibited, whilst still restricted in others. To assess the impact of these changes, our monitoring programme has been extended beyond collection storage to encompass these spaces. Data indicates the presence of pest species, and consequently an increased risk to the collection. Though of concern, finding this change in pest numbers has been useful, providing the evidence to support risk mitigation strategies and to affect change. In examining the varying factors that may have influenced pest presence, we have assessed what the risks are; where they are coming from; and who is responsible for managing them.



### Identifying and Addressing Risk

In seeking an answer to these questions, and address potential risk, we have benefited from the unique position of applying mitigation measures before an infestation occurs. We have determined that it is essential to work with three key groups of stakeholders if we are to successfully deny pests a suitable environment in which to live and breed. These are our on-site service users; all staff at TNA – in particular, those who work in high risk, collection-orientated areas; and the internal departments responsible for the management of the affected spaces. Consideration of how to communicate to these different audiences has been essential.

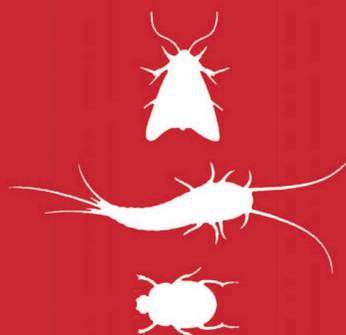


### Where Next?

We have identified a series of practical measures designed to manage ALL insect presence at TNA, whilst encouraging our stakeholders to understand their impact on insect activity, and by extension, the collection. We have recognised how we would like these groups to alter their behaviours and are working cross-departmentally to develop a targeted suite of measures that communicate best practice. These include:

- A colour-coded risk-zoning model to define areas at greatest risk, providing a framework for implementing the necessary measures for reducing the risk of pest infestation at TNA. Designations are based on the proximity of a space to vulnerable collection material, and on activities occurring in that space.
- A rolling communications campaign to ensure user groups understand how to consume, store, and dispose of food and drink safely - this will utilise internal channels such as our in-house magazine, intranet, social media channels and public engagement events.
- Provision of adequate food storage for all staff - every member of staff will be provided with a food safe plastic box in which to store their dry food goods.
- Working with internal stakeholders to agree on a shared set of responsibilities and procedures through establishment of an IPM Working Group, and to build the foundations of an organisational IPM Policy.
- For these measures, we are seeking support at the highest organisational level. Early experience with pursuing buy-in indicated concerns about messages we present to the public. It was felt that mentioning pest presence was negative and would impact on our reputation. As such, to generate investment and ensure successful implementation of mitigation measures, we will aim to secure the backing of a new strategic board designed to centre the needs of the collection.

#### Pest awareness at The National Archives



**This area is to be kept free of all food and drinks**

If you see any pests in this area, please contact the Collection Care department on extension 2485, or [consenquiries@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:consenquiries@nationalarchives.gov.uk).