# Young family’s fight against rat infestation highlights Birmingham’s housing crisis



A young father in Birmingham is raising urgent concerns about his six-month-old daughter's health due to a rat infestation outside their temporary accommodation. Kian Jones, 25, fears that the diminishing living conditions pose serious risks, especially since his daughter was born prematurely. Images and videos captured outside their flat on Fox Hollies Road depict rats scuttling amidst piled-up rubbish, which has become a significant health concern for the family.

The family occupies temporary housing while being categorised under Band A—the highest priority for social housing. Nevertheless, they find themselves languishing over 100th on the bidding list for available properties. Mr Jones expressed his frustrations, stating, “It’s unfair we’re going through this. All we're asking for is a two-bed flat, it’s not too much to ask for." He further highlighted the further distress caused by rubbish accumulating not just outside, but also on the landings of the temporary unit, exacerbating the rodent issue.

Meanwhile, Birmingham City Council acknowledges that demand for housing has never been more acute in the face of a national housing crisis. According to a spokesperson, the council is striving to construct new homes, but the current rate of house building is lagging behind demand. They also noted that a recent strike by rubbish collectors has compounded the issue, preventing waste collection for the past three weeks. The council assured residents that they are actively working to remedy the situation, and with recent legal interventions, efforts are being made to clear out overflowing bins.

The issue of rat infestations in Birmingham is not an isolated incident. Areas such as Small Heath have been experiencing similar challenges, attributed largely to fly-tipping and insufficient waste management. Activist Gerry Moynihan described the dire conditions in his community, drawing attention to the council's inadequacies in responding to these public health crises. The council’s decision to reduce waste bin collections to once every two weeks further raises alarm about deteriorating living conditions, particularly in the city’s most disadvantaged areas.

With the Regulator of Social Housing finding serious deficiencies in Birmingham City Council's management of social housing, including significant numbers of properties failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard, concerns regarding health and safety in these accommodations are becoming increasingly urgent. It has been reported that around 23,000 social homes are not compliant with safety regulations, such as overdue asbestos surveys and fire risk assessments. The council has been ordered to take immediate action to rectify these failings.

Additional historical context reveals troubling trends related to pest management in the city. For instance, one Birmingham City Council tenant was awarded compensation after enduring an 18-month rat infestation, during which the council’s response was deemed unreasonable and inadequate. This incident underlines the ongoing struggle for residents to have their concerns addressed promptly and effectively.

As the situation continues to evolve, many residents are calling for reforms, including the permanent removal of controversial charges for rat treatments, which the council briefly suspended during recent strikes. Community feedback stresses the need for more robust and responsive measures to ensure safe living conditions for all Birmingham residents, as many face the dual burdens of poor housing and pest infestations.

The plight of families like Kian Jones and his partner illustrates the significant human impact of systemic housing and governmental issues and highlights the urgent need for resolution to ensure public health and safety in Birmingham's communities.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/new-dads-plea-housing-rats-31697095), [[2]](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/new-dads-plea-housing-rats-31697095)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/new-dads-plea-housing-rats-31697095), [[2]](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/new-dads-plea-housing-rats-31697095)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/31/weve-got-rats-as-big-as-your-feet-birmingham-residents-despair-as-rubbish-piles-up), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rsh-finds-serious-problems-at-birmingham-city-council)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rsh-finds-serious-problems-at-birmingham-city-council), [[5]](https://www.pestmagazine.co.uk/news/council-tenant-wins-compensation-after-being-forced-to-live-with-rats-for-18-months.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.expressandstar.com/news/environment/2025/04/24/calls-for-rat-tax-to-be-permanently-scrapped-in-birmingham-after-welcome-change-during-bins-strike/), [[7]](https://www.localgov.co.uk/Brum-pauses-charges-for-rat-infestations/62256)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/new-dads-plea-housing-rats-31697095> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/new-dads-plea-housing-rats-31697095> - A 25-year-old father in Birmingham has expressed concerns over his six-month-old daughter's health due to a rat infestation outside their temporary accommodation. Despite being in the highest priority banding for housing, the family remains over 100th on the bidding list for properties. The council acknowledges the national housing crisis and is working to build new homes, but the current rate of house building is not keeping up with demand. Residents are encouraged to explore all housing options, including Housing Associations and the private rented sector.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/31/weve-got-rats-as-big-as-your-feet-birmingham-residents-despair-as-rubbish-piles-up> - Residents in Birmingham's Small Heath area are facing severe rat infestations due to accumulated rubbish and fly-tipping. The situation has worsened since the council declared itself bankrupt in 2022 and during recent bin worker strikes. Community activist Gerry Moynihan highlights the inadequate council response, with barriers placed around dumped rubbish instead of removal. The council plans to reduce waste bin collections to once a fortnight, raising concerns about worsening conditions in deprived areas.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rsh-finds-serious-problems-at-birmingham-city-council> - The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has found that Birmingham City Council breached consumer standards, with around 23,000 social homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard. Serious health and safety issues include overdue asbestos surveys, late electrical safety inspections, and overdue fire risk assessments. The council has been ordered to take urgent action to address these failings and return to compliance with standards.
5. <https://www.pestmagazine.co.uk/news/council-tenant-wins-compensation-after-being-forced-to-live-with-rats-for-18-months.html> - A Birmingham City Council tenant was awarded compensation after enduring an 18-month rat infestation in her flat. The council failed to address the issue promptly, leading to significant distress and inconvenience. The Housing Ombudsman found the council's handling of the infestation unreasonable and below expected standards, resulting in a ruling of maladministration.
6. <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/environment/2025/04/24/calls-for-rat-tax-to-be-permanently-scrapped-in-birmingham-after-welcome-change-during-bins-strike/> - Birmingham City Council has been urged to permanently scrap its controversial 'rat tax' charge after making a temporary change during the bins strike. The council's budget included plans to introduce new charges for rat treatments, but residents have called for these charges to be permanently removed due to the ongoing waste collection issues.
7. <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Brum-pauses-charges-for-rat-infestations/62256> - Birmingham City Council has temporarily waived charges for residents requiring help with rat infestations during the bin strikes. The council had introduced charges for the service last year as part of financial stabilisation efforts but has now paused these charges in light of the ongoing industrial action.